THE

LIFE

OF

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WITH

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON HIS WORKS.

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THE events of the life of JOHNSON, "the brighteſt ornament of the eighteenth century," who has written the lives of ſo many eminent perſons, and ſo much enriched our national ſtock of criticiſm and biography, have been related by friend and foe, by panegyriſts and ſatirical defamers, by the lovers of anecdote, and the followers of party, with a diligence of reſearch, a minuteneſs of detail, a variety of illuſtration, and a felicity of deſcription, unexampled in the records of literary biography.

Beſides ſeveral ſlight ſketches of his life, by unknown authors, taken, ſometimes with a favourable, flattering pencil, ſometimes in the broader ſtyle of caricature, which lie ſcattered in the periodical publications of the laſt ten years; voluminous biographical accounts of him have been given to the world by Thomas Tyers, Eſq. Mrs. Piozzi, Dr. Towers, Sir John Hawkins, James Boſwell, Eſq. and Arthur Murphy, Eſq. who were his moſt intimate friends, and wrote from perſonal knowledge. Their ſeveral publications, which place his character in very different, and often oppoſite points of light, by exhibiting a ſtriking likeneſs of the features of his mind, which were ſtrong and prominent, and by recording ſo conſiderable a portion of his wiſdom and wit, have exquiſitely gratified the lovers of literary anecdotes, and largely contributed to the inſtruction and entertainment of man-

kind. The publications of Mr. Tyers, Mrs. Piozzi, Dr. Towers, and Mr. Murphy, come under the deſcription of "Biographical Sketches," "Anecdotes," and "Eſſays." Thoſe of Sir John Hawkins and Mr. Boſwell are more elaborately compoſed, and entitle them to the excluſive appellation of his biographers.

On an attentive peruſal, it will be found that the narrative of Sir John Hawkins contains a collection of curious anecdotes and obſervations, which few men but its author could have brought together; but a very ſmall part of it relates to the perſon who is the ſubject of the work. He appears to be a worthy, and often a well-informed man, but he poſſeſſes neither animation nor correctneſs, expanſion of intellect, nor elegance of taſte. He writes without much feeling or ſentiment; his work is heavy, cold, and prolix; but we diſcover in it many gleams of good ſenſe,

and openings of humanity, ſometimes checked by ignorance, and ſometimes by prejudice.

The narrative of Mr. Boſwell is written with more comprehenſion of mind, accuracy of intelligence, clearneſs of narration, and elegance of language; and is more ſtrongly marked by the *deſiderium chari capitis*, which is the firſt feature of affectionate remembrance. He was peculiliarly fitted for the taſk of recording the ſayings and actions of this extraordinary man, by his aſſiduous attention. From the commencement of his acquaintance with him in 1763, he had the ſcheme of writing his life conſtantly in view; and continued his collections, with his approbation and aſſiſtance, with unwearied diligence, and meritorious perſeverance, for upwards of twenty years. He gave a ſpecimen of his being able to preſerve his converſation, in an authentic and lively

manner, in his "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," 8vo, 1786. His veneration and eſteem for his friend, induced him, at a ſubſequent period, to go through the laborious taſk of digeſting and arranging the immenſe maſs of materials, which his own diligence, and the kindneſs of others, had furniſhed him, and of forming the hiſtory of his life; which was publiſhed in 2 vols. 4to, 1791, and was received by the world with moſt extraordinary avidity.

Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of Socrates may poſſibly have ſuggeſted to Mr. Boſwell the idea of preſerving and giving to the world the *Memorabilia* of his venerable friend; but he profeſſes to have followed the model of Maſon in his "Memoirs of Gray." He has, however, the advantage of Maſon, in the quantity, variety, and richneſs of his materials. His work may be referred to that claſs of compilements known by the name of "Books in *Ana*." To com-

pare it with Monnoye's edition of the *Menagiana*, one of the moſt eſteemed of theſe publications, would not be doing juſtice to it. The incidental *converſations* between ſo eminent an inſtructor of mankind, and his friends, the numerous body of *anecdotes*, literary and biographical, and the *letters* which are occaſionally interſperſed, and naturally introduced, in the narrative part of Mr. Boſwell's ample performance, open and diſcloſe to the eager curioſity of rational and laudable inquiry, an immenſe ſtorehouſe of mental treaſure, which far exceeds, in merit and value, the voluminous collections of the wiſe and witty ſayings of the learned and ingenious men of other nations. With ſome venial exceptions on the ſcore of egotiſm and indiſcriminate admiration, his work exhibits the moſt copious, intereſting, and finiſhed picture of the life and opinions of an eminent man, that was ever executed; and is

juſtly eſteemed one of the moſt inſtructive and entertaining books in the Engliſh language.

The eccentricities of Mr. Boſwell, it is uſeleſs to detail. They have already been the ſubject of ridicule in various different forms and publications, by men of ſuperficial underſtanding, and ludicrous fancy. Many have ſuppoſed him to be a mere relater of the ſayings of others; but he poſſeſſed conſiderable intellectual powers, for which he has not had ſufficient credit. It is manifeſt to every reader of any diſcernment, that he could never have collected ſuch a maſs of information, and juſt obſervations on human life, as his very valuable work contains, without great ſtrength of mind, and much various knowledge; as he never could have diſplayed his collections in ſo lively a manner, had he not poſſeſſed a very picturesque imagination, or, in other words,

had he not had a very happy turn for poetry, as well as for humour and for wit.

This lively and ingenious biographer, is now beyond the reach of praiſe or cenſure. He died at London, May 19, 1795, in the 55th year of his age. His death is an irreparable loſs to Engliſh literature. He had many failings; and many virtues, and many amiable qualities, which predominated over the frailties incident to human nature. He will be long regretted by a wide circle of friends, to whom his good qualities and ſocial talents always made his company a valuable acceſſion.

The facts ſtated in the preſent account are chiefly taken from the narratives of Sir John Hawkins, and Mr. Boſwell; with the addition of ſuch particulars of the progreſs of his mind and fortunes, as the ſubſequent narrative of Mr. Murphy, and the moſt reſpectable periodical publications of the laſt ten years have ſupplied.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Litchfield, in Staffordſhire, September 7. 1709. His father, Michael Johnſon, was a native of Cubley, in Derbyſhire, of obſcure extraction, who ſettled in Litchfield as a bookſeller, and carried on that buſineſs at all the neighbouring towns on market days; but was ſo reſpectable as to be made one of the magiſtrates of that city. He was a man of a large and robuſt body, and of a ſtrong and active mind; but was always ſubject to a morbid melancholy. He was a zealous high-church-man and Jacobite; though he reconciled himſelf by caſuiſtical arguments of expediency and neceſſity, to take the oaths impoſed by the prevailing power. He was a pretty good Latin ſcholar, and being a man of good ſenſe and ſkill in his trade, he acquired a reaſonable ſhare of wealth, of which he afterwards loſt the greateſt part, by engaging, unſucceſsfully, in the manufacture of parch-

ment. His mother, Sarah Ford, deſcended of an ancient race of ſubſtantial yeomanry in Warwickſhire, was the ſiſter of Dr. Joſeph Ford, a phyſician of conſiderable eminence, and father of the famous Cornelius Ford, Chaplain to Lord Cheſterfield, ſuppoſed to be the Parſon in Hogarth's "Modern Midnight Converſation," a man of great parts, but of very profligate manners. She was a woman of diſtinguiſhed underſtanding, prudence, and piety. They were well advanced in years when they married, and had only another child, named Nathaniel, who ſeems to have ſucceeded his father in his buſineſs; but died in 1737, in the 25th year of his age.

During the period of infancy, all children are prodigies of form and underſtanding to their parents. With a natural fondneſs, they exaggerate every ſymptom of ſenſe into the perfection of wiſ-

dom, and deſcribe every feature with an adventitious grace. If the object of their admiration ſhould at more mature years become diſtinguiſhed for excellence, it is hoped that we may believe wonders of the child, becauſe we have ſeen greatneſs in the man. Hence, in our fondneſs for the marvellous, the traditions of the nurſery, reſpecting ſuch perſons, are amplified beyond the bounds of credibility, and recited with all the confidence of truth.

Every great genius muſt begin with a prodigy; and it is not to be ſuppoſed that Johnſon ſhould be without atteſtations of theſe miracles of early genius, which are believed by ſome to be as neceſſary to the attainment of future pre-eminence, as that fruits ſhould be preceded by the bloſſom. Among other ſtories of his infant precocity generally circulated, and generally believed, we are told by Mrs. Piozzi, and Sir

John Hawkins, that, at the age of three years, he trod by accident upon one of a brood of eleven ducks, and killed it, and upon that occaſion made the following verſes:

Here lies good maſter duck,
Whom Samuel Johnſon trod on;
If it had liv'd, it had been *good luck*,
For then we'd had an *odd one*.

This prodigy is ſcarcely exceeded by the bees on Plato's lips, or the doves that covered the infant poet with leaves and flowers; for how ſhould a child of three years old make regular verſes, and in alternate rhyme? The internal evidence is ſufficient to counterbalance any teſtimony that theſe verſes could be the production of a child of ſuch an early age. But, fortunately, credulity is relieved from the burden of doubt, by Johnſon's having himſelf aſſured Mr. Boſwell, that they were made by his father, who wiſhed them to paſs for his

ſon's. He added, " my father was a fooliſh old man, that is to ſay, fooliſh in talking of his children."

He derived from his parents, or from an unwholeſome nurſe, the diſtemper called the King's Evil. Jacobites at that time believed in the efficacy of the royal touch. His mother, yielding to this ſuperſtitious notion, in her anxiety for his cure, when he was two years old (by the advice of Sir John Floyer, then a phyſician at Litchfield), carried him to London, where he was actually touched by Queen Anne. But the diſeaſe, too obſtinate to yield to remedies more powerful, greatly disfigured his countenance, naturally harſh and rugged, impaired his hearing, and deprived him of the ſight of his left eye.

He was firſt taught to read Engliſh by Dame Oliver, a widow, who kept a ſchool for young children in Litchfield. His next inſtructor, in Engliſh, was a maſter whom

he familiarly called Tom Brown, who he ſaid "publiſhed a ſpelling-book, and dedicated it to the UNIVERSE." He began to learn Latin in the free-ſchool of Litchfield, at firſt under the care of Mr. Hawkins, the under-maſter, whom he has deſcribed as "a man ſkilful in his little way." In about two years, he roſe to be under the tuition of Mr. Hunter, the head-maſter, a very reſpectable teacher, and a worthy man; but who, according to his account, was "very ſevere, and wrong headedly ſevere." He had for his ſchool-fellows Dr. James, inventor of the fever-powder, Mr. Lowe, canon of Windſor, Dr. Taylor, rector of Aſhbourne, and Mr. Hector, ſurgeon in Birmingham, with whom he contracted a particular intimacy.

While at ſchool, he is ſaid by Mr. Hector to have been indolent and averſe from ſtudy. But the procraſtination of his duties ſeems neither to have prevented the

timely performance of his exerciſes, nor to have blemiſhed them with inaccuracies; for "he was never known to have been corrected at ſchool, unleſs for talking and diverting other boys from their buſineſs." Indeed, ſuch was the ſuperiority of his talents above thoſe of his companions, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was ſometimes one, are ſaid to have aſſembled ſubmiſſively every morning, to carry him triumphantly upon their ſhoulders to ſchool. This ovation is believed by Mr. Boſwell to have been an honour paid to the early predominance of his intellectual powers alone; but they who remember what boys are, and who conſider that Johnſon's corporeal proweſs was by no means deſpicable, will be apt to ſuſpect that the homage was enforced, at leaſt as much by awe of the one, as by admiration of the other.

After having reſided for ſome months at the houſe of his couſin, Cornelius Ford, who aſſiſted him in the claſſics, he was, by his advice, at the age of fifteen, removed to the ſchool of Stourbridge in Worceſterſhire, of which Mr. Wentworth was then maſter, whom he has deſcribed as "a very able man, but an idle man, and to me unreaſonably ſevere. Yet he taught me a great deal." He ſeems to have been there in the double capacity of a ſcholar and uſher, repaying the learning he acquired from his maſter, by the inſtruction he gave to the younger boys. Parſon Ford he has deſcribed in his "Life of Fenton," as "a clergyman at that time too well known, whoſe abilities, inſtead of furniſhing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and the diſſolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wiſe."

He thus diſcriminated to Dr. Percy, Biſhop of Dromore, his progreſs at his

two grammar-ſchools: "At one I learnt much in the ſchool, but little from the maſter; in the other I learnt much from the maſter, but little in the ſchool."

He remained at Stourbridge little more than a year, and then returned home, where he purſued his ſtudies; but not upon any regular plan. Of this method of attaining knowledge, he ſeems ever after to have entertained a favourable opinion, and to have recommended it, not without reaſon, to young men, as the ſureſt means of enticing them to learn. What he read was not works of mere amuſement. "They were not voyages and travels, but all literature, all ancient authors, all manly; though but little Greek, only ſome of Anacreon and Heſiod. But in this irregular manner, I had looked into a great many books, which were not commonly known at the univerſities, where they ſeldom read any books but what are put

into their hands by their tutors; ſo that when I came to Oxford, Dr. Adams told me I was the beſt qualified for the univerſity that he had ever known come there."

He had already given ſeveral proofs of his poetical genius, both in his ſchool exerciſes, and in other occaſional compoſitions. Of theſe Mr. Boſwell obtained a conſiderable collection from Mr. Wentworth, the ſon of his maſter, and Mr. Hector, his ſchool-fellow; of which he has preſerved ſome tranſlations from *Homer*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, &c. Unfortunately the communications of Mr. Wentworth are not diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of Mr. Hector. Such a precaution would have enabled us to have diſtinguiſhed with certainty the efforts of the boy, from the production of riper years. His tranſlation of the *firſt eclogue of Virgil*, is not ſo harmonious as that from the *ſixth book of Homer*; and both are inferior in this reſpect to

thoſe which he has made of the *Odes of Horace*. Indeed, in the ſtyle and manner of verſification uſed in the laſt, and in ſome other of his juvenile pieces, he ſeems to have made little alteration in his more experienced days; and it muſt be added, that in point of ſmoothneſs, little improvement could have been made.

After a reſidence of two years at home, Mr. Andrew Corbet, a gentleman of Shropſhire, undertook to ſupport him at Oxford, in the character of a companion to his ſon, one of his ſchool-fellows, "though, in fact," ſays Mr. Boſwell, upon the authority of Dr. Taylor, "he never received any aſſiſtance whatever from that gentleman." He was accordingly entered a Commoner at Pembroke College, Oxford, October 31. 1728, being then in his nineteenth year.

On the night of his arrival at Oxford, his father, who had anxiouſly accompa-

nied him, found means to have him introduced to Mr. Jorden, Fellow of Pembroke, who was to be his tutor. According to Dr. Adams, who was preſent, he ſeemed very full of the merits of his ſon, and told the company he was a good ſcholar and a poet, and wrote Latin verſes. His figure and manner ſeemed ſtrange to them; but he behaved modeſtly, and ſat ſilent, till, upon ſomething which occurred in the courſe of converſation, he ſuddenly ſtruck in, and quoted Macrobius; and this gave the firſt impreſſion of that extenſive reading in which he had indulged himſelf.

Of his tutor, Mr. Jorden, he gave Mr. Boſwell the following account: "He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his inſtruction. Indeed, I did not attend him much." He had, however, a love and reſpect for Jorden, not for his literature, but for his worth. "Whenever (ſaid he) a young

man becomes Jorden's pupil, he becomes his ſon."

The fifth of November was at that time kept with great ſolemnity at Pembroke College, and exerciſes upon the gunpowder plot were required. Johnſon neglected to perform his. To apologize for his neglect, he gave in a ſhort copy of verſes, intituled *Somnium*, containing a common thought, "that the muſe had come to him in his ſleep, and whiſpered that it did not become him to write on ſuch ſubjects as politics; he ſhould confine himſelf to humbler themes;" but the verſification was truly Virgilian.

Having given ſuch a ſpecimen of his poetical powers, he was aſked by Mr. Jorden to tranſlate Pope's *Meſſiah* into Latin hexameter verſe, as a Chriſtmas exerciſe. He performed it with uncommon rapidity, and in ſo maſterly a manner, that he obtained great applauſe from it, which

ever after kept him high in the eſtimation of his college and indeed of all the univerſity. Pope, impelled by gratitude and taſte, perhaps not unaſſiſted by vanity, is reported to have ſaid concerning it, "that the author would leave it a queſtion for poſterity, whether his or mine be the original?" It was firſt printed by his father, without his knowledge; and afterwards inſerted in a "Miſcellany," publiſhed by ſubſcription at Oxford, in 1731, by Mr. John Huſbands, Fellow of Pembroke College.

The particular courſe of his reading while at Oxford, and during the time of vacation which he paſſed at home, cannot be traced. From his earlieſt years he loved to read poetry and romances of chivalry. He read Shakſpeare at a period ſo early, that the ſpeech of the ghoſt in "Hamlet" terrified him when he was alone. Horace's odes were the compoſi-

tions he moſt liked in early life; but it was long before he could reliſh his ſatires and epiſtles. He told Mr. Boſwell, what he read *ſolidly* at Oxford was Greek, not the Grecian hiſtorians, but Homer and Euripides, and now and then a little epigram; that the ſtudy of which he was moſt fond was metaphyſics; but he had not read much even in that way. We may be abſolutely certain, however, both from his writings and his converſation, that his reading was very extenſive. He projected a common-place book to the extent of ſix folio volumes, but according to Sir John Hawkins, the blank leaves far exceeded the written ones.

In 1729, while at Litchfield, during the college vacation, the "morbid melancholy" which was lurking in his conſtitution, gathered ſuch ſtrength as to afflict him in a dreadful manner. He was overwhelmed with an horrible hypocondria, with perpe-

tual irritation, fretfulneſs, and impatience, and with a dejection, gloom, and deſpair, that made exiſtence miſery. He fancied himſelf ſeized by, or approaching to inſanity; in conformity with which notion he applied, when he was at the very worſt, to his godfather, Dr. Swinfen, phyſician in Litchfield, and put into his hand a ſtate of his caſe, written in Latin; "which ſhowed," as Mr. Boſwell expreſſes it, "an uncommon vigour, not only of fancy and taſte, but of judgment." That he ſhould have ſuppoſed himſelf approaching to inſanity, at the very time when he was giving proofs of a more than ordinary ſoundneſs and vigour of judgment, is leſs ſtrange than that Mr. Boſwell ſhould conſider the vigour of *fancy*, which he diſplayed on ſuch a ſubject, a proof of his ſanity. It is a common effect of melancholy to make thoſe who are afflicted with it imagine that they are actually ſuffering

thoſe evils which happen to be moſt ſtrongly preſented to their minds. But there is a clear diſtinction between a diſorder which affects only the imagination and ſpirits, while the judgment is ſound, and a diſorder by which the judgment itſelf is impaired. Whatever be the arguments in favour of free-will, of volition unreſtrained by the force and prevalence of motives, it muſt be allowed that the effects of reaſon on the human mind are not at all times, and on all ſubjects, equally powerful. The mind, like the body, has its weak organs; in other words, the impreſſions on ſome ſubjects are ſo deeply fixed, that the judgment is no longer able to guide the operations of the mind, in reaſoning on, or in judging of them. The imagination ſeizes the rein, and till the force of the idea is leſſened from habit, the uſual powers are ſuſpended. But this is not madneſs; for ſtrong impreſſions of

various kinds, will, in different minds, produce ſimilar effects. From this diſmal malady, which he " did not then know how to manage," he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labours, and all his employments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence.

In the hiſtory of his mind, his religious progreſs is an important article. He had been early inſtructed in the doctrines of the church of England, by his mother, who continued her pious care with aſſiduity, but in his opinion, not with judgment. " Sunday" ſaid he " was a heavy day to me when I was a boy. My mother confined me on Sundays, and made me read " The Whole Duty of Man," from a great part of which I could derive no inſtruction. When, for inſtance, I read the chapter on theft, which, from infancy, I had been taught was wrong, I was no more convinced that theft was wrong than before; ſo there was no acceſ-

ſion of knowledge. A boy ſhould be introduced to ſuch books by having his attention directed to the arrangement, to the ſtyle, and other excellencies of compoſition, that the mind being thus engaged by an amuſing variety of objects, may not grow weary."

He communicated to Mr. Boſwell the following account of "the firſt occaſion of his thinking in earneſt of religion." I fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Litchfield, in which we had a ſeat, wanted reparation: ſo I was to go and find a ſeat in other churches; and having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I uſed to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my fourteenth year, and ſtill I find a great reluctance to go to church. I then became a ſort of lax *talker* againſt religion, for I did not much *think* about it; and

this laſted till I went to Oxford, where it would not be *ſuffered*. When at Oxford, I took up Law's "Serious Call to the Unconverted," expecting to find it a dull book (as ſuch books generally are), and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an over-match for me; and this was the firſt occaſion of my thinking in earneſt of religion, after I became capable of rational inquiry."

Serious impreſſions of religion, from particular incidents, it is certain, have been experienced by many pious perſons; though it muſt be acknowledged, that weak minds, from an erroneous ſuppoſition, that no man is in a ſtate of grace, who has not felt a particular converſion, have, in ſome caſes, brought a degree of ridicule upon them; a ridicule of which it is inconſiderate or unfair to make a general application. How ſeriouſly Johnſon was impreſſed with a ſenſe of religion, from this time

forward, appears from the whole tenor of his life and writings. Religion was the predominant object of his thoughts; though he ſeems not to have attained all the tranquillity and aſſurance in his practice of its duties that are ſo earneſtly to be deſired. His ſentiments, upon points of abſtract virtue and rectitude, were in the higheſt degree elevated and generous, but he was unfortunate enough to have the ſublimity of his mind degraded by the hypochondriacal propenſities of his animal conſtitution. The ſerenity, the independence, and the exultation of religion, were ſentiments to which he was a ſtranger. He ſaw the Almighty in a different light from what he is repreſented in the purer page of the goſpel; and he trembled in the preſence of Infinite Goodneſs. Thoſe tenets of the church of England, which are moſt nearly allied to Calviniſm, were congenial to his general feelings, and they

made an early impreſſion, which habits confirmed, and which reaſon, if ever exerted, could not efface. At the latter part of his life theſe terrors had a conſiderable effect; nor was their influence loſt, till diſeaſe had weakened his powers, and blunted his feelings.

The year following, 1730, Mr Corbet left the univerſity, and his father, to whom, according to Sir John Hawkins, he truſted for ſupport, declined contributing any farther to Johnſon's maintenance, than paying for his Commons. His father's buſineſs was by no means lucrative. His remittances, conſequently, were too ſmall even to ſupply the decencies of external appearance; and the very ſhoes that he wore were ſo much torn, that they could no longer conceal his feet. So jealous, however, was he of appearing an object of eleemoſynary contribution, that a new pair having been placed at his door, by

ſome unknown hand, he flung them away with indignation.

While thus oppreſſed by want, he ſeems to have yielded to that indifference to fame and improvement, which is the offſpring of deſpair. "He was generally ſeen," ſays Dr. Percy, "lounging at the college gate, with a circle of young ſtudents round him, whom he was entertaining with wit, and keeping from their ſtudies, if not ſpiriting them up to rebellion againſt the college diſcipline, which, in his maturer years, he ſo much extolled." The account of his conduct given by Dr. Adams, who was at leaſt his nominal tutor for ſome time before he quitted the college, is more favourable to his happineſs, but is leſs true. "Johnſon," ſays he, "while he was at Pembroke College, was careſſed and loved by all about him; he was a gay and frolicſome fellow, and paſſed there the happieſt part of his life."

But his own comment upon this opinion, when mentioned to him by Mr Boſwell, ſhows how fallacious it is to eſtimate human happineſs by external appearances: "Ah Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterneſs which they miſtook for frolic. I was miſerably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; ſo I diſregarded all power, and all authority."

He ſtruggled for another year in this unequal conflict, and profeſſed a deſire to practiſe either the Civil or the Common Law; but his debts in college increaſing, and his ſcanty remittances from Litchfield, which had all along been made with great difficulty, being diſcontinued, his father having fallen into a ſtate of inſolvency, he was compelled, by irreſiſtible neceſſity, to relinquiſh his ſcheme, and left the college in autumn 1735, without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three

years. This was a circumſtance, which, in the ſubſequent part of his life, he had occaſion to regret, as the want of it was an obſtacle to his obtaining a ſettlement, whence he might have derived that ſubſiſtence of which he was certain by no other means.

From the univerſity he returned to his native city, deſtitute, and not knowing how he ſhould gain even a decent livelihood. But he was ſo far fortunate, that the reſpectable character of his parents, and his own merit, ſecured him a kind reception in the beſt families of Litchfield. Mr. Gilbert Walmſley, Regiſter of the Prerogative Court at Litchfield, " was one of the firſt friends that Literature procured" him; and he paſſed much time in the families of Mr. Howard, and Dr. Swinfen, Mr. Simpſon, Mr. Levett, and Captain Garrick, father of the great ornament of the Britiſh ſtage. He has drawn the character of Mr. Walmſley in his " Life of Smith,"

in the glowing colours of gratitude, intermingled with the dark hues of political prejudice. In his abhorrence of whiggiſm, he has imputed to his friend and benefactor, " all the virulence and malevolence of his party." Yet Mr. Walmſley, whoſe real character is a noble one, loved Johnſon enough to endure in *him* the principles he deſpiſed.

In the circles of Litchfield, he was frequently in the company of ladies, particularly at Mr. Walmſley's, whoſe wife and ſiſter-in-law, of the name of Aſton, and the daughters of a Baronet, were remarkable for elegance and good breeding. Of Miſs Molly Aſton, who was afterwards married to Captain Brodie of the Navy, he uſed to ſpeak with the warmeſt admiration. " Molly" (ſaid he) " was a beauty and a ſcholar, a wit and a whig, and ſhe talked all in praiſe of liberty; and ſo

I made this epigram upon her. She was the loveliest creature I ever saw!

Liber ut esse velim, suasisti, pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber; pulchra Maria, vale."

Of this epigram, Mrs. Piozzi, and Mr. Joddrel, and Mr. Boswell, among others, have offered translations. The following version is given by Mr. Boswell:

Adieu Maria! since you'd have me free:
For who beholds thy charms, a slave must be.

In December 1731, his father died, in the 79th year of his age, in very narrow circumstances; for, after providing for his mother, that portion of the effects which fell to his share amounted only to twenty pounds.

In the forlorn state of his circumstances, he accepted the employment of usher in the school of Market-Bosworth in Leicestershire, to which he went on foot, July

16. 1732. He reſided in the houſe of Sir Woolſton Dixie, the patron of the ſchool, to whom he officiated as a kind of domeſtic chaplain; and who treated him with intolerable harſhneſs. His employment was irkſome to him in every reſpect; and after ſuffering for a few months, what Mr. Boſwell terms "complicated miſery," he relinquiſhed a ſituation which he ever afterwards remembered with a degree of horror.

Being now again totally unoccupied, he was invited by Mr. Hector to paſs ſome time with him at Birmingham, as his gueſt, at the houſe of Mr. Warren, with whom he lodged. Mr. Warren was the firſt eſtabliſhed bookſeller in Birmingham, and was very attentive to Johnſon, and obtained the aſſiſtance of his pen, in furniſhing ſome periodical eſſays in a newſpaper of which he was proprietor.

In June 1733, he reſided in the houſe of a perſon named Jarvis, in another part

of the town, where he tranſlated and abridged, from the French of the Abbé Le Grand, a *Voyage to Abyſſinia*, written originally by *Jerome Lobo*, a Portugueſe Jeſuit. For this work, which was printed in Birmingham, and publiſhed by Betteſworth and Hitch of Pater-noſter Row, London, 8vo, 1735, but without the tranſlator's, name, he had from Mr. Warren only five guineas. It is the firſt proſe work of Johnſon; but it exhibits no ſpecimen of elegance; neither is it marked by any character of ſtyle, which would lead to a diſcovery of the tranſlator, from an acquaintance with his latter productions. It has, however, been juſtly remarked by Mr. Boſwell, that the *Preface* and *Dedication*, contain ſtrong and not unfavourable ſpecimens of that ſtyle of thought and manner of expreſſion, which he afterwards adopted.

In February 1734, he returned to Litchfield, and in Auguſt following, publiſhed

propoſals for printing by ſubſcription an edition of the Latin poems of Politian, *Angeli Politiani Poemata Latina, quibus notas, cum hiſtoria Latinæ poeſeos, a Petrarchæ ævo ad Politiani tempora deducta et vita Politiani fuſius quam antehac enarrata, addidit* SAM. JOHNSON; the work to be printed in thirty 8vo ſheets, price 5s. "Subſcriptions taken in by the editor, or N. Johnſon, bookſeller of Litchfield," his brother, who had taken up his father's trade. For want of encouragement, the work never appeared, and probably never was executed.

We find him again this year at Birmingham; and in order to procure ſome little ſubſiſtence by his pen, he addreſſed a letter, under the name of *S. Smith*, to Mr. Edward Cave, the proprietor of the "Gentleman's Magazine," November 25. 1734, in which he propoſed, "on reaſonable terms, ſometimes to ſupply him with

poems, inſcriptions, &c. never printed before, and ſhort literary diſſertations in Latin or Engliſh, critical remarks on authors, ancient or modern, forgotten poems that deſerve revival, looſe pieces, like Floyer's, worth preſerving." To this letter Mr. Cave returned an anſwer, dated December 2. 1734; but it does not appear that any thing was done in conſequence of it.

He had, from his infancy, been ſenſible to the influence of female charms. When at Stourbridge ſchool he was much enamoured of Olivia Llyod, a young Quaker, to whom he wrote a copy of verſes; he conceived a tender paſſion for Lucy Porter, whoſe mother he afterwards married, and whom he had frequent opportunities of ſeeing at the houſe of Mr. Hunter of Litchfield, whoſe ſecond wife was her aunt. He addreſſed to her, as ſhe herſelf informed Miſs Seward, " when he was a lad," the *verſes to a Lady, on her preſenting*

the author with a ſprig of myrtle; which Mr. Hector ſays were written at his requeſt, in 1731, for his friend Mr. Morgan Graves; but the two accounts are not irreconcileable, for he might give them to Mr. Hector, without thinking it material to mention their pre-exiſtence.

His juvenile attachments to the fair ſex were, however, very tranſient, and he never had a criminal connection. In 1735, he became the fervent admirer of Mrs. Porter, widow of Mr. Henry Porter, mercer in Birmingham, to whoſe family he had probably been introduced by his ſiſter Mrs. Hunter of Litchfield, or through his acquaintance with Jarvis, who might be a relation of Mrs. Porter, whoſe maiden name was Jarvis. "It was," he ſaid, "a love match on both ſides;" and, judging from the deſcription of their perſons, we muſt ſuppoſe that the paſſion was not inſpired by the beauties of form, or graces

of manner, but by a mutual admiration of each others mind. Johnſon's appearance is deſcribed as being very forbidding: "He was then lean and lank, ſo that his immenſe ſtructure of bones was hideouſly ſtriking to the eye, and the ſcars of the ſcrophula were deeply viſible. He alſo wore his hair, which was ſtraight and ſtiff, and ſeparated behind; and he often had ſeemingly convulſive ſtarts and odd geſticulations, which tended at once to excite ſurpriſe and ridicule." Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnſon, and her perſon and manner, as deſcribed by Garrick, were by no means pleaſing to others. "She was very fat, with a boſom of more than ordinary protuberance. Her ſwelled cheeks were of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increaſed by the liberal uſe of cordials, flaring and fantaſtic in her dreſs, and affected both in her ſpeech and in her general behaviour."

It is to be obſerved, however, that whatever her real charms may have been, Johnſon thought her beautiful, for in her *Epitaph* he has recorded her as ſuch; and in his *Prayers* and *Meditations*, we find very remarkable evidence that his regard and fondneſs for her never ceaſed, even after death.

The marriage ceremony was performed, July 9th, at Derby, for which place the bride and bridegroom ſet out on horſeback; and it muſt be allowed that the capricious and fantaſtic behaviour of the bride, during the journey to church, upon the nuptial morn, as related by Mr. Boſwell, was a ſingular beginning of connubial felicity.

She was worth about 800l., which, to a perſon in Johnſon's circumſtances, made it a deſirable match. To turn this ſum to the beſt advantage, he hired a large houſe at Edial, near Litchfield, and ſet

up a private claſſical academy, in which he was encouraged by his friend Mr. Walmſley. In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1736, there is the following "ADVERTISEMENT—At Edial, near Litchfield, in Staffordſhire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON." The plan, notwithſtanding, proved abortive. The only pupils that were put under his care, were Garrick, and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of a good fortune, who died early.

About this time we find him diligently employed on his *Irene*, a tragedy, with which Mr. Walmſley was ſo well pleaſed, that he adviſed him to proceed with it. It is founded upon a paſſage in Knolles's "Hiſtory of the Turks," a book which he afterwards highly praiſed and recommended in the *Rambler*.

Diſappointed in his expectation of deriving ſubſiſtence from the eſtabliſhment of a boarding-ſchool, he now thought of trying his fortune in London, the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind have the fulleſt ſcope, and the higheſt encouragement.

On the 2d of March 1737, being the 28th year of his age, he ſet out for London, and it is a memorable circumſtance, that his pupil Garrick went thither at the ſame time, with intention to complete his education, and follow the profeſſion of the law. They were recommended to Mr. Colſon, maſter of the mathematical ſchool at Rocheſter, by a letter from Mr. Walmſley, who mentions the joint expedition of theſe two eminent men to the metropolis, in the following manner:

" This young gentleman, and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. Samuel Johnſon, ſet out this morning for London to-

gether. Davy Garrick is to be with you early the next week, and Mr. Johnſon, to try his fate with a tragedy, and to ſee to get himſelf employed in ſome tranſlation, either from the Latin or the French. Johnſon is a very good ſcholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy writer."

How he employed himſelf upon his firſt coming to London, is not certainly known. His firſt lodgings were at the houſe of Mr. Norris a ſtaymaker in Exeter-Street, in the Strand. Here he found it neceſſary to practiſe the moſt rigid economy; and his *Oſellus* in the *Art of Living in London*, is a real character of an Iriſh painter, who initiated him in the art of living cheaply in London.

Soon after his arrival in London, he renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Henry Hervey, one of the branches of the Briſtol family, whom he had known when he was

quartered at Litchfield as an officer of the army. At his houſe he was entertained with a kindneſs and hoſpitality of which he ever afterwards retained a warm remembrance. Not very long before his death, he deſcribed this early friend "Harry Hervey," thus: "he was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog *Hervey*, I ſhall love him."

He had now written three acts of his *Irene;* and he retired for ſome time to lodgings at Greenwich, where he proceeded in it ſomewhat farther, and uſed to compoſe walking in the Park; but he did not ſtay long enough in that place to finiſh it.

At this period, he wiſhed to engage more cloſely with Mr. Cave, and propoſed to him, in a letter dated Greenwich, July 12. 1737, to undertake a tranſlation of Father Paul Sarpi's "Hiſtory of the Council of Trent," from the French edition of Dr.

Le Courayer. His propoſal was accepted; but it ſhould ſeem from this letter, though ſubſcribed with his own name, that he had not yet been introduced to Mr. Cave.

In the courſe of the ſummer, he returned to Litchfield, where he had left his wife; and there he at laſt finiſhed his tragedy; which was not executed with his rapidity of compoſition upon other occaſions, but was ſlowly and painfully elaborated. The original unformed ſketch of this tragedy, partly in the raw materials of proſe, and partly worked up in verſe, in his own handwriting, is preſerved in the King's Library.

In three months after, he removed to London with his wife; but her daughter, who had lived with them at Edial, was left with her relations in the country. His lodgings were for ſome time in Woodſtock-Street, near Hanover-Square, and afterwards in Caſtle-Street, near Cavendiſh-Square. His tragedy being, as he thought,

completely finiſhed, and fit for the ſtage, he ſolicited Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury-Lane Theatre, to have it acted at his houſe; but Mr. Fleetwood would not accept it.

Upon his coming to London, he was inliſted by Mr. Cave, as a regular coadjutor in his magazine, which, for many years, was his principal reſource for employment and ſupport. A conſiderable period of his life is loſt in ſaying that he was the hireling of Mr. Cave. The narrative is little diverſified by the enumeration of his contributions. But the publications of a writer, like the battles and ſieges of a general, are the circumſtances which muſt fix the ſeveral eras of his life. In this part of the narrative, the pieces acknowledged by Johnſon to be of his writing, are printed in Italics, and thoſe which are aſcribed to him upon good authority, or internal evi-

dence, are diſtinguiſhed by inverted commas.

His firſt performance in the "Gentleman's Magazine," was a Latin Ode, *Ad Urbanum*, in March 1738, a tranſlation of which, by an unknown correſpondent, appeared in the Magazine for May following.

At this period, the misfortunes and miſconduct of Savage had reduced him to the loweſt ſtate of wretchedneſs as a writer for bread; and his viſits at St. John's Gate, where the "Gentleman's Magazine" was originally printed, naturally brought Johnſon and him together. Johnſon commenced an intimacy with this extraordinary man. Both had great parts, and they were equally under the preſſure of want. They had a fellow-feeling, and ſympathy united them cloſer.

It is melancholy to reflect, that Johnſon and Savage were ſometimes in ſuch

extreme indigence, that they could not pay for a lodging, ſo that they have wandered together whole nights in the ſtreets. Yet as Savage had ſeen life in all its varieties, and been much in the company of the ſtateſmen and wits of his time, we may ſuppoſe, in theſe ſcenes of diſtreſs, that he communicated to Johnſon an abundant ſupply of ſuch materials as his philoſophical curioſity moſt eagerly deſired, and mentioned many of the anecdotes with which he afterwards enriched the life of his unhappy companion.

He mentioned to Sir Joſhua Reynolds, that one night in particular, when Savage and he walked round St. James's Square, for want of a lodging, they were not at all depreſſed by their ſituation, but in high ſpirits; and, brimful of patriotiſm, traverſed the Square for ſeveral hours, inveighed againſt the miniſter, and "reſolved they would *ſtand by their country*."

Sir John Hawkins ſuppoſes that " Johnſon was captivated by the addreſs and demeanour of Savage, who, as to his exterior, was to a remarkable degree accompliſhed; he was a handſome well made man, and very courteous in the modes of ſalutation." He took off his hat, he tells us, with a good air, made a graceful bow, and was a good ſwordſman. " Theſe accompliſhments," he adds, " and the eaſe and pleaſantry of his converſation, were probably the charms that wrought on Johnſon, who at this time had not been accuſtomed to the converſation of gentlemen." But if, according to his biographer's notion, he " never ſaw the charms of his wife," how ſhould he perceive the graces of Savage?

Johnſon, indeed, deſcribes him as having " a graceful and manly deportment, a ſolemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, ſoftened into an

engaging eaſineſs of manners." How highly he admired him for that knowledge, which he himſelf ſo much cultivated, and what kindneſs he entertained for him, appears in the following verſes in the Gentleman's Magazine for April 1738.

Ad RICARDUM SAVAGE *Arm. humani generis amatorem.*

Humani ſtudium generis cui pectore fervet,
O! colat humanum te foveatque genus!

About this time he became acquainted with Miſs Elizabeth Carter, the learned tranſlator of "Epictetus," to whom he paid a friendly attention, and in the ſame Magazine complimented her in *An Ænigma to Eliza*, both in Greek and Latin. He writes Mr. Cave, "I think ſhe ought to be celebrated in as many different languages as Lewis le Grand." His verſes *to a Lady*, (Miſs Molly Aſton) *who ſpoke in defence of liberty*, firſt appeared in the ſame Magazine.

In May 1738, he publiſhed his *London, a Poem*, written in imitation of the 3d ſatire of Juvenal. It has been generally ſaid, that he offered it to ſeveral bookſellers, none of whom would purchaſe it. Mr. Cave, at laſt, communicated it to Dodſley, who had taſte enough to perceive its uncommon merit, and thought it "creditable to be concerned with it." Dodſley gave him 10l. for the copy. It is remarkable, that it came out on the ſame morning with Pope's ſatire, intituled, "1738," One of its warmeſt patrons was General Oglethorpe. Pope alſo was ſo ſtruck with its merit, that he ſought to diſcover the author, and propheſied his future fame. "He will," ſaid he, "ſoon be *deterré*," and it appears from his note to Lord Gower, he himſelf was ſucceſsful in his inquiries. To "a ſhort extract from *London*," in the Gentleman's Magazine for May, is added, "Become remarkable for

having got to the ſecond edition in the ſpace of a week." This admirable poem laid the firſt foundation of his fame. Sir John Hawkins obſerves, that in this poem he has adopted the vulgar topic of the time, to gratify the malevolence of the Tory faction; and Mr. Boſwell candidly allows, that "the flame of patriotiſm and zeal for popular reſiſtance with which it is fraught, had no juſt cauſe." It contains the moſt ſpirited invectives againſt tyranny and oppreſſion, the warmeſt predilection for his own country, and the pureſt love of virtue, interſperſed with traits of his own particular character and ſituation. He heated his mind with the ardour of Juvenal, and he wrote with the ſpirit and energy of a fine poet, and a ſharp critic of the times. Boileau had imitated the ſame ſatire with great ſucceſs, applying it to Paris; but an attentive compariſon will ſatisfy every reader that he is much excelled

by Johnſon. Oldham had alſo imitated it, and applied it to London; but there is ſcarcely any coincidence between the two performances, though upon the very ſame ſubject.

In the courſe of his engagement with Mr. Cave, he compoſed the *Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia*, the firſt number of which appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for June 1738, ſometimes with feigned names of the ſeveral ſpeeches, ſometimes with denominations formed of the letters of their real names, ſo that they might be eaſily decyphered. Parliament then kept the preſs in a kind of myſterious awe, which made it neceſſary to have recourſe to ſuch devices. The debates for ſome time were brought home and digeſted by Guthrie, and afterwards ſent by Mr. Cave to Johnſon for his reviſion. When Guthrie had attained to a greater variety of employment, and the ſpeeches were

more and more enriched by the acceſſion of Johnſon's genius, it was reſolved that he ſhould do the whole himſelf, from notes furniſhed by perſons employed to attend in both houſes of Parliament. His ſole compoſition of them began November 19. 1740, and ended February 23. 1742-3. From that time they were written by Hawkeſworth to the year 1760. Johnſon acknowledged the debates to be ſpurious, long after the world had conſidered them as genuine; and ſome days previous to his death, declared, that of all his writings they gave him the moſt uneaſineſs. The deceit, however, could not be very pernicious, in the effects of which ſo many perſons were involved. Neither are they ſo completely his own compoſition as is generally ſuppoſed. That notes of the ſpeeches were taken in the Houſes of Parliament, and given to him, is evident from his own declarations. And it does not

appear probable that Mr. Cave, who was ever attentive to the improvement of his Magazine, ſhould be more negligent in procuring notes as accurate as he could, during the time when Johnſon executed this department, than when it was in the hands of Guthrie. It ſeems at leaſt moſt likely, therefore, that the language and illuſtrations are Johnſon's own, but that the arguments and general arrangements were taken from the ſeveral ſpeeches ſpoken in either Houſe.

The trade of writing was, however, ſo little profitable, that notwithſtanding the ſucceſs of his *London*, he wiſhed to accept an offer made to him, of becoming maſter of the free ſchool at Appleby in Leiceſterſhire (Pope ſays in Shropſhire), the ſalary of which was ſixty pounds a-year. But the ſtatutes of the ſchool required that he ſhould be a Maſter of Arts, and it was then thought too great a favour to be aſked of

the Univerſity of Oxford. Pope, without any knowledge of him, but from his *London*, recommended him to Lord Gower, who, by a letter which has been often printed, to a friend of Swift, dated Trentham, Auguſt 1. 1738, endeavoured to procure him a degree from Trinity-College, Dublin. This expedient failed. There is reaſon to think that Swift declined to meddle in the buſineſs; and to this circumſtance Johnſon's known diſlike of Swift has been often imputed.

He made one other effort to emancipate himſelf from the drudgery of authorſhip, by endeavouring to be introduced to the bar at Doctor's Commons; but here the want of a Doctor's degree in Civil Law, was alſo an unſurmountable impediment.

He was, therefore, under the neceſſity of perſevering in that courſe into which he was forced; and we find him proſecuting his deſign of tranſlating Father Paul's

" *Hiſtory of the Council of Trent*," in 2 vols. 4to, which was announced in the " Weekly Miſcellany," October 21. 1738. Twelve ſheets of this tranſlation were printed off; but the deſign was dropped; for it happened, that another Samuel Johnſon, Librarian of St. Martin's in the Fields, and Curate of that pariſh, had engaged in the ſame undertaking, under the patronage of Dr. Pearce; the conſequence of which was, an oppoſition, which mutually deſtroyed each others hopes of ſucceſs.

In the " Gentleman's Magazine" of this year, beſides the pieces already mentioned, he gave a *Life of Father Paul* in the November Magazine, and wrote the " Preface" to the volume. The " Apotheoſis of Milton, a viſion," printed in the Magazine for 1738 and 1739, given to him by Sir John Hawkins, was the production of Guthrie. The tranſlation of Cronſaz's " Examination of Pope's Eſſay on Man,"

and printed by Cave in November 1738, has been aſcribed to him; but Miſs Carter has lately acknowledged that ſhe was the tranſlator.

In 1739, beſide the aſſiſtance he gave to the *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*, his writings in the "Gentleman's Magazine," were, *The Life of Boerhaave*, *An Appeal to the Public in behalf of the Editor*, *Verſes to Eliza*, *a Greek Epigram to Dr. Birch*, and "Conſiderations on the caſe of Dr. Trapp's Sermons," reprinted in the Magazine for July 1787.

The ſame year he joined in the clamour againſt Walpole, and publiſhed his famous Jacobite pamphlet intituled, *Marmor Norfolcienſe, or an Eſſay on an Ancient Prophetical inſcription in Monkiſh rhyme, lately diſcovered near Lynne, in Norfolk, by Probus Britannicus.* In this performance, he inveighs againſt the Brunſwick ſucceſſion, and the meaſures of Government conſequent upon it,

with warm anti-Hanoverian zeal. The Jacobite principles inculcated by it, according to Sir John Hawkins, aroused the vigilance of the Miniſtry. A warrant was iſſued, and meſſengers were employed to apprehend the author, who, it ſeems, was known. To elude his purſuers, he retired with his wife to Lambeth-marſh, and there lay concealed in an obſcure lodging till the ſcent grew cold. Mr. Boſwell however denies that there is any foundation for this ſtory; for that Mr. Steele, one of the late ſecretaries of the Treaſury, had directed every poſſible ſearch to be made in the records of the Treaſury and Secretary of State's Office, but could find no trace of any warrant having been iſſued to apprehend the author of this pamphlet. His *Marmor Norfolcienſe* obtained alſo the honour of Pope's commendation, as appears from the following note concerning Johnſon, copied with minute exactneſs, by

Mr. Boſwell, from the original in the poſſeſſion of Dr. Percy.

" This [*London*] is imitated by one Johnſon, who put in for a public ſchool in Shropſhire, but was diſappointed. He has an infirmity of the convulſive kind, that attacks him ſometimes, ſo as to make him a ſad ſpectacle. Mr. P. from the merit of this work, which was all the knowledge he had of him, endeavoured to ſerve him without his own application; and wrote to my Lord Gower, but he did not ſucceed; Mr. Johnſon publiſhed afterwards another poem in Latin, with notes, the whole very humorous, called the Norfolk Prophecy."

In the ſame year 1739, he publiſhed *A complete Vindication of the Licenſers of the Stage, from the malicious and ſcandalous aſperſions of Mr. Brooke, au hor of Guſtavus Vaſa, in 4to.* This was an ironical, but a very proper attack upon the Lord Chamberlain, for the injuſtifiable ſuppreſſion of

that tragedy. Indeed the power veſted in that officer, reſpecting dramatic pieces, is a diſgrace to a free country; and the act which gave him that power ought to be repealed. To juſtify the rejection of this play, Sir John Hawkins ſelects a few paſſages, not one of which would give umbrage at this day.

In July 1739, a ſubſcription was completed for Savage, who was to retire to Swanſea; and he parted with the companion of his midnight rambles, never to ſee him more. This ſeparation was perhaps a real advantage to Johnſon. By aſſociating with Savage, who was habituated to the licentiouſneſs and diſſipation of the town, Johnſon, though his good principles remained ſteady, did not entirely preſerve that temperance for which he was remarkable, in days of greater ſimplicity, but was imperceptibly led into ſome indulgences, which occaſioned much diſtreſs to his vir-

tuous mind. It is ſaid by Sir John Hawkins, that during his connection with Savage, a ſhort ſeparation took place between Johnſon and his wife. They were, however, ſoon brought together again. Johnſon loved her, and ſhowed his affection in various modes of gallantry, which Garrick uſed to mimic. The affectation of faſhionable airs did not ſit eaſy on Johnſon; his gallantry was received by the wife with the flutter of a coquette, and both, we may believe, expoſed themſelves to ridicule.

In 1740, he contributed to the "Gentleman's Magazine," the "Preface," *Life of Admiral Blake*, and the firſt parts of thoſe of *Sir Francis Drake*, and of *Philip Barettier*, both which he finiſhed the year after; An "Eſſay on Epitaphs," and an *Epitaph on Philips, a muſician*, which was afterwards publiſhed, with ſome other pieces, in Miſs Williams's "Miſcellanies."

In 1741, he wrote for the " Gentleman's Magazine," the " Preface," concluſion of his *Lives of Drake and Barettier*; " A free tranſlation of the Jeſts of Hierocles, with an Introduction," " Debate on the propoſal of Parliament to Cromwell, to aſſume the title of King, abridged, methodized, and digeſted; " Tranſlation of Abbé Guyon's Diſſertation on the Amazons; " Tranſlation of Fontenelle's Panegyric on Dr. Morin." He, this year, and the two following, wrote the *Parliamentary Debates*. The eloquence, the force of argument, and the ſplendour of language diſplayed in the ſeveral ſpeeches, are well known, and univerſally admired. To one who praiſed his impartiality, obſerving that he had dealt out reaſon and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties, " That is not quite true, Sir, ſaid Johnſon; I ſaved appearances well enough, but I took care that the WHIG DOGS ſhould not have the

beſt of it." They have been collected in 2 vols. 8vo, 1787, and recommended to the notice of parliamentary ſpeakers, as orations upon queſtions of public importance, by a "Preface," written by George Chalmers, Eſq. whoſe commercial and biographical writings are well known and eſteemed.

In 1742, he wrote for the "Gentleman's Magazine," the "Preface;" the *Parliamentary Debates; Eſſay on the Account of the Conduct of the Ducheſs of Marlborough*, then the popular topic of converſation; *The Life of Peter Burman; Additions to his Life of Barettier; The Life of Sydenham*, afterwards prefixed to Swan's edition of his works; the "Foreign Hiſtory," for December; "Eſſay on the Deſcription of China, from the French of Du Halde; *Propoſals for printing Bibliotheca Harlecana; or, a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford.* It was afterwards prefixed to the

firſt volume of the "Catalogue," in which the Latin account of books were written by him. He was employed in this buſineſs by Mr. Thomas Oſborne, bookſeller in Gray's Inn, who purchaſed the library for 13,000l., a ſum which, Mr. Oldys ſays, in one of his manuſcripts, was not more than the binding of the books had coſt; yet the ſlowneſs of the ſale was ſuch, that there was not much gained by it. It has been confidently related, with many embelliſhments, that Johnſon knocked Oſborne down in his ſhop with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. Johnſon himſelf relates it differently to Mr. Boſwell. "Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him; but it was not in his ſhop, it was in my own chamber." This anecdote has been often told to prove Johnſon's ferocity; but merit cannot always take the ſpurns of the unworthy with patience and a forbearing ſpirit.

He wrote in the " Gentleman's Magazine" for 1743, the " Preface;" the *Parliamentary Debates* for January and February; " Conſiderations on the Diſpute between Cronſaz and Warburton, on Pope's Eſſay on Man," in which he defends Cronſaz; *Ad Lauram parituram Epigramma; A Latin tranſlation of Pope's Verſes on his Grotto;* an exquiſitely beautiful *Ode on Friendſhip;* and an " Advertiſement" for Oſborne, concerning the Harleian Catalogue.

The ſame year he wrote for his ſchoolfellow, Dr. James's " Medicinal Dictionary," in 3 vols. folio, the *Dedication to Dr. Mead,* which is conceived with great addreſs, to conciliate the patronage of that very eminent man. He had alſo written, or aſſiſted in writing, the propoſals for this work; and, being very fond of the ſtudy of phyſic, in which Dr. James was his maſter, he furniſhed ſome of the articles.

At this time, his circumſtances were much embarraſſed; yet ſuch was his liberal affection for his mother, that he took upon himſelf a debt of her's, to Mr. Levett of Litchfield, which, though only twelve pounds, was then conſiderable to him.

In 1744, he wrote the "Preface" for the Gentleman's Magazine, and the *Preface to the Harleian Miſcellany*. The ſelection of the pamphlets of which it was compoſed was made by Mr. Oldys, a man of eager curioſity, and indefatigable diligence, to whom Engliſh literature owes many obligations.

The ſame year he produced one work fully ſufficient to maintain the high reputation which he had acquired. This was the *Life of Savage*, which he had announced his intention of writing in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for Auguſt 1743. It is ſaid by Sir John Hawkins, that he compoſed the whole of it in thirty-ſix hours;

but Mr. Boſwell ſtates, upon Johnſon's own authority, that he compoſed forty-eight of the preſent octavo pages at a ſitting, but that he ſat up all night. It came out in February, from the ſhop of Roberts, who, in April following, republiſhed his *Life of Barettier*, in a ſeparate pamphlet. It was no ſooner publiſhed than the following liberal praiſe was given to it by Fielding, in "The Champion," which was copied into the "Gentleman's Magazine" for April, and confirmed by the approbation of the public.

"This pamphlet is, without flattery to its author, as juſt and well-written a piece of its kind as I ever ſaw. It is certainly penned with equal accuracy and ſpirit, of which I am ſo much the better judge, as I knew many of the facts to be ſtrictly true, and very fairly related. It is a very amuſing, and withal a very inſtructive and valuable performance. The author's ob-

ſervations are ſhort, ſignificant, and juſt, as his narrative is remarkably ſmooth, and well diſpoſed. His reflections open to all the receſſes of the human heart; and, in a word, a more juſt or pleaſant, a more engaging, or a more inſtructive treatiſe on all the excellencies and defects of human nature, is ſcarce to be found in our own, or perhaps any other language."

Johnſon had now lived nearly half his days, without friends or lucrative profeſſion; he had toiled and laboured, yet ſtill, as he himſelf expreſſes it, was "to provide for the day that was paſſing over him." Of the profeſſion of an unfriended author he ſaw the danger and the difficulties. Amhurſt, who had conducted "The Craftſman," Savage, Boyſe, and others who had laboured in literature, without emerging from diſtreſs, were recent examples, and clouded his proſpect.

Sir John Hawkins has preſerved a liſt of literary projects, not leſs than thirty-nine articles, which he had formed in the courſe of his ſtudies; but ſuch was his want of encouragement, or the verſatility of his temper, that not one of all his ſchemes was ever executed.

A new edition of Shakſpeare now occurred to him, and, as a prelude to it, in April 1745, he publiſhed a pamphlet, intituled *Miſcellaneous Obſervations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition of Shakſpeare; to which is affixed, propoſals for a new edition of Shakſpeare, with a Specimen*, 8vo. The notice of the public was, however, not excited to his anonymous propoſals for the execution of a taſk which Warburton was known to have undertaken; the project, therefore, died at that time, to revive at a future period. His pamphlet, however, was highly eſteemed, and even the ſupercilious War-

burton, in the " Preface" to his Shakſpeare, publiſhed two years afterwards, had the candour to exempt it from his general cenſure " of thoſe things which have been publiſhed under the titles of "Eſſays," "Remarks," " Obſervations," &c. on " Shakſpeare," and ſpoke of it as the work of " a man of great parts and genius." This obligation Johnſon always acknowledged in terms of gratitude. " He praiſed me (ſaid he) at a time when praiſe was of value to me."

In the year 1746, which was marked by a civil war in Britain, when a raſh attempt was made to reſtore the houſe of Stuart to the throne, his literary career appears to have been almoſt totally ſuſpended. His attachment to that unfortunate family is well known ; ſome may imagine that a ſympathetic anxiety impeded the exertion of his intellectual powers ; but it is probable that he was, during that

time, employed upon his *Shakſpeare*, or ſketching the outlines of his *Dictionary of the Engliſh Language*.

Having formed and digeſted the plan of his great philological work, which might then be eſteemed one of the deſiderata of Engliſh literature, he communicated it to the public, in 1747, in a pamphlet intituled, *The Plan of a Dictionary of the Engliſh Language, addreſſed to the Right Honourable Philip Dormer, Earl of Cheſterfield, one of his Majeſty's Secretaries of State.* The hint of undertaking this work is ſaid to have been firſt ſuggeſted to Johnſon by Dodſley, who contracted with him for the execution of it in conjunction with Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Meſſrs. Longman, and the two Meſſrs. Knapton. The price ſtipulated was 1575l.

The *Plan* has not only the ſubſtantial merit of comprehenſion, perſpicuity, and preciſion, but the language of it is unex-

ceptionably excellent; and never was there a more dignified ſtrain of compliment than that in which he courts the attention of Cheſterfield, who was very ambitious of literary diſtinction, and who, upon being informed of the deſign, had expreſſed himſelf in terms very favourable to its ſucceſs. The way in which it came to be inſcribed to Cheſterfield was this: "I had neglected," ſays he, "to write it by the time appointed. Dodſley ſuggeſted a deſire to have it addreſſed to Lord Cheſterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it might be better done, and let Dodſley have his deſire." The *Plan* itſelf, however, proves that the Earl not only favoured the deſign, but that there had been a particular communication with his Lordſhip concerning it.

To enable him to complete this vaſt undertaking, he hired a houſe in Gough-Square, Fleet-Street, fitted up one of the

upper rooms after the manner of a counting-houſe, and employed ſix amanuenſes there in tranſcribing; five of whom were natives of North Britain, Mr. Macbean, author of "A Syſtem of Ancient Geography," &c. Mr. Shiels, the principal collector and digeſter of the materials for the "Lives of the Poets 1753," to which the name of Mr. Theo. Cibber is prefixed; Mr. Stewart, ſon of Mr. George Stewart, bookſeller in Edinburgh; and a Mr. Maitland: the ſixth was Mr. Peyton, a French maſter, who publiſhed ſome elementary tracts. The words, partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly ſupplied by himſelf, having been firſt written down, with ſpaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and various ſignifications. The authorities were copied from the books themſelves, in which he had marked the

paſſages with a black lead pencil, the traces of which could eaſily be effaced.

This year he contributed to the "Gentleman's Magazine," for May, five ſhort poetical pieces. "A tranſlation of a Latin Epitaph on Sir Thomas Hanmer," "To Miſs ——, on her giving the author a gold and ſilk net-work purſe of her own weaving," "Stella in Mourning," "The Winter's Walk," "An Ode," and "To Lyce, an elderly Lady," diſtinguiſhed by three aſteriſks. In the Magazine for December, he inſerted an *Ode on Winter*, which is one of the beſt of his lyric compoſitions.

In September, this year, his fortunate pupil, Garrick, having become joint-patentee and manager of Drury-lane theatre, he furniſhed him with a *Prologue* at the opening of it, which, for juſt and manly criticiſm, as well as for poetical excellence, is unrivalled in that ſpecies of compoſition.

In 1748, while he was employed in his *Dictionary*, he exerted his talents in occaſional compoſition, very different from lexicography, and formed a club that met at Horſeman's chop-houſe in Ivy-lane, Pater-noſter Row, every Tueſday evening, with a view to enjoy literary diſcuſſion, and the pleaſure of animated relaxation. The members aſſociated with him in this little ſociety, were his beloved friend, Dr. Richard Bathurſt, a phyſician, Dr. Hawkeſworth, Dr. Salter, father of the late maſter of the charter-houſe, Mr. Ryland, a merchant, Mr. John Payne, then a bookſeller in Pater-noſter Row, Mr. Samuel Dyer, a learned young man, intended for the diſſenting miniſtry, Dr. William M'Ghie, a Scotch phyſician, Dr. Edmund Barker, a young phyſician, and Sir John Hawkins. The endowments of Mr. Dyer are repreſented by Sir John Hawkins as of ſuch a ſuperior kind, " that in ſome inſtances

Johnſon might almoſt be ſaid to have looked up to him." They uſed to diſpute in this club, about the *moral ſenſe* and the *fitneſs of things*, but Johnſon was not uniform in his opinions; contending as often for victory as truth. This infirmity attended him through life.

In this year he publiſhed, in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for May, *The Life of Roſcommon*, which has ſince been inſerted in his "Lives of the Poets." He wrote alſo the *Preface* to Dodſley's "Preceptor," and the *Viſion of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe, found in his cell*, a moſt beautiful allegory of human life, under the figure of aſcending the mountain of exiſtence, which he himſelf thought the beſt of his writings.

In January 1749, he publiſhed *The Vanity of Human Wiſhes, being the tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated*, with his name. Of this poem, he compoſed ſeventy lines in one

day, without putting one of them upon paper till they were finiſhed. He received of Dodſley, for the copy, only fifteen guineas. It has been thought to have leſs of common life, and more of a philoſophic dignity than his *London*. It is characterized by profound reflection, more than pointed ſpirit. It has, however, always been held in high eſteem, and is certainly as great an effort of ethic poetry as any language can ſhow. The inſtances of the variety of diſappointment are choſen ſo judiciouſly, and painted ſo ſtrongly, that the moment they are read, they bring conviction to every thinking mind.

On the 8th of February this year, his tragedy of *Irene*, which had been long kept back for want of encouragement, was brought upon the ſtage at Drury-Lane, by the kindneſs of Garrick. A violent diſpute aroſe between him and the manager, relative to the alterations neceſſary to be

made to fit it for the theatre. The poet for a long time refuſed to ſubmit his lines to the critical amputation of the actor, and the latter was obliged to apply to Dr. Taylor to become a mediator in the diſpute. Johnſon's pride at length gave way to alterations; but whether to the full extent of the manager's wiſhes, is not known. Dr. Adams was preſent the firſt night of the repreſentation, and gave Mr. Boſwell the following account: "Before the curtain drew up, there were catcalls whiſtling, which alarmed Johnſon's friends. The prologue, which was written by himſelf, in a manly ſtrain, ſoothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably till it came to the concluſion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be ſtrangled upon the ſtage, and was to ſpeak two lines with the bow ſtring round her neck. The audience cried out, "Murder! Murder!" She ſeveral times attempt-

ed to ſpeak, but in vain. At laſt ſhe was obliged to go off the ſtage alive." This paſſage was afterwards ſtruck out, and ſhe was carried off to be put to death behind the ſcenes, as the play now has it. Mr. Boſwell aſcribes the epilogue to Sir William Yonge; but upon no good foundation.

In the unfavourable deciſion of the public upon his tragedy, Johnſon acquieſced without a murmur. He was convinced that he had not the talents neceſſary to write ſucceſsfully for the ſtage, and never made another attempt in that ſpecies of compoſition.

In December this year, he wrote the *Preface* and *Poſtſcript* to Lauder's "Eſſay on Milton's Uſe, and Imitation of the Moderns, in his Paradiſe Loſt," 8vo, a book made up of forgeries, and publiſhed to impoſe upon mankind. Sir John Hawkins tells us, that Johnſon aſſiſted Lauder

from motives of enmity to the memory of Milton; but it appears, that while Lauder's work was in the preſs, the proof ſheets were ſubmitted to the inſpection of the Ivy-Lane Club. If Johnſon approved of the deſign, it was no longer than while he believed it founded in fact. With the reſt of the club, he was in one common error. As ſoon as Dr. Douglas, now Biſhop of Saliſbury, eſpouſed the cauſe of truth, and with ability that will ever do him honour, dragged the impoſtor to open daylight, Johnſon made ample reparation to the genius of Milton. He not only diſclaimed the fraud, but inſiſted on the impoſtor confeſſing his offence; and for this purpoſe drew up a recantation, which Lauder ſigned and publiſhed, intituled, "A letter to the Rev. Mr. Douglas, occaſioned by his Vindication of Milton," by William Lauder, M. A. 4to, 1751. The frankneſs of this confeſſion would

have made ſome atonement for the baſeneſs of the attempt, and its abject humility been deemed a ſufficient puniſhment of the impoſtor, if that unhappy man had not had the folly and wickedneſs afterwards to deny this apology, and reaſſert his former accuſation, in a pamphlet intituled, "King Charles Vindicated from the Charge of Plagiariſm, brought againſt him by Milton, and Milton himſelf convicted of Forgery and a groſs impoſition on the Public," 8vo, 1755. This effort of ſpleen and malice was alſo abortive; and Lauder ſoon afterwards retired to Barbadoes, where he died, as he had lived, an object of general contempt, in 1771.

On the 20th March 1750, he publiſhed the firſt paper of the *Rambler*, and continued it without interruption every Tueſday and Friday, till the 17th of March 1752, when it cloſed. In carrying on this periodical publication, he ſeems neither

to have courted, nor to have met with much aſſiſtance, the number of papers contributed by others amounting only to five in number, four billets in No. 10, by Mrs. Chapone, No. 30, by Mrs. Talbot, No. 97, by Richardſon, and Nos. 44. and 100, by Miſs Carter. Theſe admirable eſſays, we are told by Mr. Boſwell, were written in haſte, juſt as they were wanted for the preſs, without even being read over by him before they were printed.

Making every allowance for powers far exceeding the uſual lot of man, ſtill there are bounds which we muſt ſet to our belief upon this head. It is not at every ſeaſon that the mind can concentrate its faculties to a particular ſubject with equal ſtrength, or that the fancy can create imagery ſpontaneouſly to adorn and enforce its reaſonings. That Johnſon ſometimes ſelected his ſubject, culled his images, and arranged his arguments for theſe papers,

is evident from the notes of his common-place book, preſerved by Sir John Hawkins and Mr. Boſwell. When he planned ſome eſſays with ſuch minute carefulneſs, it is not likely that he truſted wholly to the ſudden effuſions of his mind for the remainder. Thoſe which are taken from the notes of his common-place book, do not manifeſt by an excellence ſuperior to the reſt, peculiar labours of mind in the conception, or pains in the compoſition; and we cannot ſuppoſe a man ſo happy in his genius, that the new-born offspring of his brain ſhould invariably appear as ſtrong and perfect as thoſe which have been matured, faſhioned, and poliſhed by ſedulous reflection. This, therefore, appears to be moſt probable, with reſpect to the wonderful faculty which he is ſaid to have manifeſted in this and other of his works; that during his ſleepleſs nights and frequent abſtractions from company, he con-

ceived and ſketched much of an impending work; that though he had in ſome degree preconceived his materials, he committed nothing to paper, juſt as he is known to have done in compoſing his *Vanity of Human Wiſhes*. If this ſuppoſition ſtrips the account of wonder, it inveſts it with probability, ſince a man of his powers of mind and habits of compoſition, might well write an eſſay at a ſitting, and without a blot, when he had little more to attend to, than to clothe his conceptions in vigorous language, modulated into ſonorous periods.

The *Rambler* was not ſucceſsful as a periodical work, not more than five hundred copies of any one number having been ever printed. Of courſe, the bookſeller, who paid Johnſon four guineas a-week, did not carry on a very ſucceſsful trade; his generoſity and perſeverance are to be commended. While it was coming out

in ſingle papers at London, Mr. James Elphinſtone ſuggeſted, and took the charge of an edition at Edinburgh, which followed progreſſively the London publication, printed by Sands, Murray and Cochrane, with uncommon elegance, upon writing paper, of a duodecimo ſize, and was completed in eight volumes. Soon after the firſt folio edition was concluded, it was publiſhed in four octavo volumes; and Johnſon lived to ſee a juſt tribute of approbation paid to its merit in the extenſiveneſs of its ſale, ten numerous editions of it having been printed in London, before his death, beſides thoſe of Ireland and Scotland.

This year he wrote a *Prologue*, which was ſpoken by Garrick, before the acting of "Comus," at Drury-Lane theatre, April 5, for the benefit of Mrs. Elizabeth Foſter, Milton's grand-daughter, and the only ſurviving branch of his family, and

took a very zealous intereſt in the ſucceſs of the charity. Tonſon, the bookſeller, gave 20l. and Dr. Newton brought a large contribution; yet all their efforts, joined to the allurements of Johnſon's pen, and Garrick's performance, procured only 130l.

In 1751, while he was employed both on the *Rambler* and his *Dictionary*, he wrote the *Life of Cheynell*, in "The Student, or the Oxford and Cambridge Miſcellany," a periodical work, in which Smart, Colman, Thornton, and other wits of both the univerſities, diſtinguiſhed their talents.

Sir John Hawkins relates, that in the ſpring of this year, he indulged himſelf in a frolic of midnight revelry. This was to celebrate the birth of Mrs. Lennox's firſt literary child, the novel of "Harriet Stuart." He drew the members of the Ivy-Lane Club, and others, to the number of twenty, to the Devil Tavern, where

Mrs. Lennox and her huſband met them. Johnſon, after an invocation of the muſes, and ſome other ceremonies of his own invention, inveſted the authoreſs with a laurel crown. The feſtivity was protracted till morning, and Johnſon through the night was a Bachanalian, without the uſe of wine.

Though his circumſtances, at this time, were far from being eaſy, he received as a conſtant viſitor at his houſe, Miſs Anna Williams, daughter of a Welſh phyſician, and a woman of more than ordinary talents and literature, who had juſt loſt her ſight. She had contracted a cloſe intimacy with his wife; and after her death, ſhe had an apartment from him, at all times when he had a houſe. In 1755, Garrick gave her a benefit, which produced 200l. In 1766, ſhe publiſhed a quarto volume of "Miſcellanies," and thereby increaſed her little ſtock to 300l. This,

and Johnſon's protection, ſupported her during the reſt of her life.

In 1752, he republiſhed his verſion of Pope's *Meſſiah*, in the Gentleman's Magazine. Soon after his cloſing the *Rambler*, March 2, he ſuffered a loſs which affected him with the deepeſt diſtreſs. On the 17th of March, O. S. his wife died; and after a cohabitation of ſeventeen years, left him a childleſs widower, abandoned to ſorrow, and incapable of conſolation. She was buried in the chapel of Bromley in Kent, under the care of his friend, Dr. Hawkeſworth, who reſided at that place. In the interval between her death and burial, he compoſed a *funeral ſermon* for her, which was never preached; but, being given to Dr. Taylor, has been publiſhed ſince his death. With the ſingularity of his prayers for *Tetty*, from that time to the end of his life, the world is ſufficiently acquainted. By her firſt huſband

ſhe left a daughter, and a ſon, a captain in the navy, who, at his death, left 10,000l. to his ſiſter.

On this melancholy event Johnſon felt the moſt poignant diſtreſs. She is, however, reported not to have been worthy of this ſincere attachment. Mrs. Deſmoulins, who lived for ſome time with her at Hampſtead, told Mr. Boſwell, that ſhe indulged herſelf in country air and nice living, at an unſuitable expence, while her huſband was drudging in the ſmoke of London; that ſhe was negligent of economy in her domeſtic affairs; and that ſhe by no means treated him with that complacency which is the moſt engaging quality in a wife. But all this is perfectly compatible with his fondneſs for her; eſpecially when it is remembered, that he had a high opinion of her underſtanding; and that the impreſſion which her beauty, real, or imaginary, had originally made

upon his imagination, being continued by habit, had not been effaced, though ſhe herſelf was, doubtleſs, much altered for the worſe. Sir John Hawkins has declared himſelf inclined to think, "that if this fondneſs of Johnſon for his wife was not diſſembled, it was a leſſon that he had learned by rote; and that when he practiſed it, he knew not where to ſtop, until he became ridiculous." To argue from her being much older than Johnſon, or any other circumſtances, that he could not really love her, is abſurd; for love is not a ſubject of reaſoning, but of feeling; and, therefore, there are no common principles upon which one can perſuade another concerning it. That Johnſon married her for love is believed. During her life he was fond and indulgent. At her death he was agonized; and, ever after, cheriſhed her image as the companion of his moſt ſolemn hours. If ſeventeen years paſſed in

acts of tenderneſs during their union, and a longer period ſpent in regret after death had divided them, cannot fix our opinion that Johnſon's fondneſs was not the effect of diſſimulation, or the unfelt leſſon of a parrot, where ſhall we fix bounds to ſuſpicion, or place limits to the preſumption of man, in paſſing ſentence upon the feelings of his neighbour?

The following authentic and artleſs account of his ſituation after his wife's death, was given to Mr. Boſwell, by Francis Barbar, his faithful negro-ſervant, who was brought from Jamaica by Colonel Bathurſt, father of his friend Dr. Bathurſt, and came into his family about a fortnight after the diſmal event.

" He was in great affliction:—Miſs Williams was then living in his houſe, which was in Gough-Square. He was buſy with his *Dictionary;* Mr. Shiels, and ſome others of the gentlemen who had formerly writ-

ten for him, uſed to come about him. He had then little for himſelf; but frequently ſent money to Mr. Shiels, when in diſtreſs. The friends who viſited him at that time, were chiefly Dr. Bathurſt, and Mr. Diamond, an apothecary in Cork-Street, Burlington-Gardens, with whom he and Miſs Williams generally dined every Sunday. There was a talk of his going to Ireland with him, which would probably have happened had he lived. There were alſo Mr. Cave, Dr. Hakeſworth, Mr. Ryland merchant on Tower-hill, Mrs. Maſters the poeteſs, who lived with Mr. Cave, Mrs. Carter, and ſometimes Mrs. Macaulay; alſo Mrs. Gardiner, wife of a tallow-chandler in Snowhill, not in the learned way, but a worthy good woman; Mr. (now) Sir Joſhua Reynolds, Mr. Millar, Mr. Dodſley, Mr. Bouquet, Mr. Payne of Pater-noſter Row, bookſeller; Mr.

Strahan the printer; the Earl of Orrery, Lord Southwell, Mr. Garrick, &c."

Johnſon ſeems to have ſought a remedy for this deprivation of domeſtic ſociety, in the company of his acquaintance, the circle of which was now very extenſive. Among his more intimate companions at this time, are to be reckoned, Dr. Bathurſt, Dr. Hakeſworth, Sir Joſhua Reynolds; and Bennet Langton, Eſq. and Topham Beauclerck, Eſq. eldeſt ſon of Lord Sidney Beauclerck, young men of elegant manners, who conceived for him the moſt ſincere veneration and eſteem. Innumerable were the ſcenes in which he was amuſed by them, who, though their opinions and modes of life were different, formed an agreeable attachment.

Mr. Boſwell has given the following account of an adventure of Johnſon's, with his gay companions, which diſplays the author of the *Rambler* in a new light, and

ſhows that his conduct was not always ſo ſolemn as his eſſays.

" One night when Beauclerck and Langton had ſupped at a tavern in London, and ſat till about three in the morning, it came into their heads to go and knock up Johnſon, and ſee if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble. They rapped violently at the door of his chambers in the Temple, till, at laſt, he appeared in his ſhirt, with his little black wig on the top of his head, inſtead of a night cap, and a poker in his hand; imagining, probably, that ſome ruffians were coming to attack him. When he diſcovered who they were, and was told their errand, he ſmiled, and with great good humour, agreed to their propoſal. " What! is it you, ye dogs! I'll have a friſk with you." He was ſoon dreſſed; and they ſallied forth together into Covent-Garden, where the green grocers and fruiterers were begin-

ning to arrange their hampers juſt come in from the country. Johnſon made ſome attempts to help them; but the honeſt gardeners ſtared ſo at his figure and manner, and odd interference, that he ſoon ſaw his ſervices were not reliſhed. They then repaired to one of the neighbouring taverns, and made a bowl of that liquor called *Biſhop*, which Johnſon had always liked; while in joyous contempt of ſleep, from which he had been rouſed, he repeated the feſtive lines,

> Short, O ſhort then be thy reign,
> And give us to the world again!

"They did not ſtay long, but walked down to the Thames, took a boat, and rowed to Billingſgate. Beauclerck and Johnſon were ſo well pleaſed with their amuſement, that they reſolved to perſevere in diſſipation for the reſt of the day; but Langton deſerted them, being engaged to breakfaſt with ſome young ladies."

In the catalogue of Johnſon's viſitants, given by his ſervant, many are no doubt omitted; in particular, his humble friend Robert Levett, an obſcure practiſer in phyſic amongſt the lower people, with whom he had been acquainted from the year 1746. Such was his predilection for him, and fanciful eſtimation of his moderate abilities, that he conſulted him in all that related to his health, and "made him ſo neceſſary to him, as hardly to be able to live without him." He now drew him into a cloſer intimacy with him, and not long after, gave him an apartment in his houſe; of which he continued a conſtant inmate during the remainder of his life. He waited upon him every morning through the whole courſe of his tedious breakfaſt, and was ſeen generally no more by him till midnight. He was of a ſtrange groteſque appearance; ſtiff and formal in his manner, and ſeldom ſaid a word while any

company was preſent. He married, when he was near ſixty, a ſtreet-walker, who perſuaded him that ſhe was a woman of family and fortune. His character was rendered valuable by repeated proofs of honeſty, tenderneſs, and gratitude to his benefactor, as well as by an unceaſing diligence in his profeſſion. His ſingle failing was an occaſional departure from ſobriety.

In a ſhort time after the *Rambler* ceaſed, Dr. Hawkeſworth projected the "Adventurer," in connection with Bonnel Thornton, Dr. Bathurſt and others. The firſt number was publiſhed, November 7. 1752, and the paper continued twice a-week, till March 9. 1754. Thornton's aſſiſtance was ſoon withdrawn, and he ſet up a new paper, in conjunction with Colman, called the "Connoiſſeur."

Johnſon was zealous for the ſucceſs of the "Adventurer," which was at firſt ra-

ther more ſucceſsful than the *Rambler*. He engaged the aſſiſtance of Dr. Warton, whoſe admirable eſſays are well known. April 10. 1753, he began to write in it, marking his papers with the ſignature *T*; all of which, except thoſe which have alſo the ſignature *Miſargyrus* (by Dr. Bathurſt), are his. His price was two guineas for each paper. Of all theſe papers, he gave both the fame and the profit to Dr. Bathurſt. Indeed, the latter wrote them while Johnſon dictated; though he conſidered it as a point of honour not to own them. He even uſed to ſay he did not *write* them, on the pretext that he *dictated* them only; allowing himſelf, by this caſuiſtry, to be "acceſſary to the propagation of falſehood," though his conſcience had been hurt by even the appearance of impoſition in writing the *Parliamentary Debates*. This year he wrote for Mrs. Lennox, the *Dedication to*

the Earl of Orrery, of her "Shakſpeare Illuſtrated," 2 vols. 12mo.

The death of Mr. Cave, January 10. 1754, gave him an opportnity of ſhewing his regard for his early patron, by writing his *Life*, which was publiſhed in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for February. This ſeems to have been the only new performance of that year, except his papers in the "Adventurer." In the end of July, he found leiſure to make an excurſion to Oxford, for the purpoſe of conſulting the libraries there. "He ſtayed," ſays Mr. Warton, "about five weeks; but he collected nothing in the libraries for his *Dictionary*."

As the *Dictionary* drew towards a concluſion, Cheſterfield, who had previouſly treated Johnſon with unpardonable neglect (which was the real cauſe of the breach between them, and not the commonly received ſtory of Johnſon's being denied ad-

mittance while Cibber was with his lordſhip), now as meanly courted a reconciliation with him, in hopes of being immortalized in a dedication. With this view, he wrote two eſſays in "The World" in praiſe of the *Dictionary*, and, according to Sir John Hawkins, ſent Sir Thomas Robinſon to him, for the ſame purpoſe. But Johnſon, who had not renounced the connection, but upon the juſt grounds of continued neglect, was ſenſible, that to liſten to an accommodation, would be to exchange dignity for a friendſhip trifling in its value, and precarious in its tenure. He therefore rejected his advances, and ſpurned his proffered patronage, by the following letter, dated February 1755, which is preſerved here as a model of courtly ſarcaſm, and manly reprehenſion, couched in terms equally reſpectful in their form, and cutting in their eſſence. It affords the nobleſt leſſon to both authors and patrons

that ſtands upon record in the annals of literary hiſtory.

"I have been lately informed by the proprietor of "The World," that two papers in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordſhip. To be ſo diſtinguiſhed, is an honour, which, being very little accuſtomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon ſome ſlight encouragement, I firſt viſited your Lordſhip, I was overpowered, like the reſt of mankind, by your addreſs, and could not forbear to wiſh that I might boaſt myſelf *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*, that I might obtain that regard for which I ſaw the world contending; but I found my attendance ſo little encouraged, that neither pride nor modeſty would ſuffer me to continue it. When I had once addreſſed your Lordſhip

in public, I had exhauſted all the art of pleaſing, which a retired and uncourtly ſcholar can poſſeſs. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleaſed to have his all neglected, be it ever ſo little.

" Seven years, my Lord, have now paſſed ſince I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulſed from your door; during which time, I have been puſhing on my work through difficulties, of which it is uſeleſs to complain, and have brought it, at laſt, to the verge of publication, without one act of aſſiſtance, one word of encouragement, or one ſmile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

" The Shepherd in Virgil grew at laſt acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

" Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man ſtruggling for life in the water, and, when he has

reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleaſed to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind: but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am ſolitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical aſperity, not to confeſs obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public ſhould conſider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myſelf.

"Having carried on my work thus far, with ſo little obligation to any favourer of learning, I ſhall not be diſappointed though I ſhould conclude it, if leſs be poſſible, with leſs; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boaſted myſelf with ſo much exultation,—My Lord, your, &c."

Johnſon, however, acknowledged to Mr. Langton, that " he did once receive ten pounds from Lord Cheſterfield; but that, as that was ſo inconſiderable a ſum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find place in a letter of the kind that this was." Cheſterfield read the letter to Dodſley with an air of indifference, " ſmiled at the ſeveral paſſages, and obſerved how well they were expreſſed." He excuſed his neglect of Johnſon, by ſaying, " that he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived;" and declared, " that he would have turned off the beſt ſervant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome." Of Cheſterfield's general affability and eaſineſs of acceſs, eſpecially to literary men, the evidence is unqueſtionable; but, from the character which he gave of Johnſon, in his " Letters to his

Son" [Let. 112.], and the difference in their manners, little union or friendſhip could be looked for between them. Certain it is, however, that Johnſon remained under an obligation to Cheſterfield, to the value of *ten pounds*.

On the 10th of February, previous to the publication of his *Dictionary*, the Univerſity of Oxford, in anticipation of the excellence of this work, at the ſolicitation of his friend Mr. Warton, unanimouſly conferred upon him the degree of Maſter of Arts; which, it has been obſerved, could not be obtained for him at an early period, but was now conſidered as an honour of conſiderable importance, in order to grace the title page of his *Dictionary*.

At length, in May following, his *Dictionary*, with a *Grammar* and *Hiſtory of the Engliſh Language*, was publiſhed in 2 vols. folio; and was received by the learned world, who had long wiſhed for its appear-

ance, with an applauſe proportionable to the impatience which the promiſe of it had excited. Though we may believe him, in the declaration at the end of his *Preface*, that he "diſmiſſed it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from cenſure or from praiſe;" we cannot but ſuppoſe that he was pleaſed "in the gloom of ſolitude," with the honour it procured him, both abroad and at home. The Earl of Corke and Orrery, being at Florence, preſented it to the *Academia della Cruſca*. That academy ſent Johnſon their *Vocabulario*, and the French Academy ſent him their *Dictionaire*, by Mr. Langton. As though he had foreſeen ſome of the circumſtances which would attend this publication, he obſerves, "A few wild blunders and riſible abſurdities, from which no work of ſuch multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furniſh Folly with laughter, and harden Ignorance into contempt;

but uſeful Diligence will at laſt prevail, and there can never be wanting ſome who diſtinguiſh deſert." Among thoſe who amuſed themſelves and the public on this occaſion, Mr. Wilkes, in an Eſſay printed in the Public Advertiſer, ridiculed the following paſſage in the *Grammar*. "H ſeldom, perhaps never, begins any but the firſt ſyllable." The poſition is undoubtedly expreſſed with too much latitude; but Johnſon never altered the paſſage. Dr. Kenrick's threatened attack, ſeveral years after, in his Review of Johnſon's *Shakſpeare*, never ſaw the light. Campbell's ridicule of his ſtyle under the title of "Lexiphanes," 1767, and Callender's "Deformities of Dr. Johnſon," 1782, though laughable, from the application of Johnſon's "words of large meaning" to inſignificant matters, are ſcarcely worthy of notice. His old pupil, Garrick, com-

plimented him on its coming out firſt, in the following " Epigram," alluding to the ill-ſucceſs of the *forty* members of the French Academy employed in ſettling their language.

Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance
That one Engliſh ſoldier will beat ten of France:
Would we alter the boaſt, from the ſword to the pen,
Our odds are ſtill greater, ſtill greater our men;
In the deep mines of ſcience, though Frenchmen may toil,
Can their ſtrength be compar'd to Locke, Newton, and Boyle:
Let them rally their heroes, ſend forth all their powers,
Their verſe-men, and proſe-men; then match them with ours;
Firſt Shakſpeare and Milton, like gods in the fight,
Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;
In ſatires, epiſtles, and odes would they cope,
Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
And Johnſon, well arm'd like a hero of yore,
Has beat *forty* French, and will beat forty more!

In this year, he afforded his aſſiſtance to Mr. Zechariah Williams, father of the blind lady whom he had humanely receiv-

ed under his roof, who had quitted his profeſſion in hopes of obtaining the great parliamentary reward for the diſcovering of the longitude; and benevolently wrote for him, " An account of an attempt to aſcertain the longitude at ſea, by an exact theory of the variation of the magnetical needle; with a table of the variations at the moſt remarkable cities in Europe, from the year 1660, to 1860, 4to, by Zachariah Williams." This pamphlet was publiſhed in Engliſh and Italian, the tranſlation being the work, as is ſuppoſed, of Mr. Baretti. Mr. Williams failed of ſucceſs, and died July 12. 1755, in his 83d year. Johnſon placed this pamphlet in the Bodleian library, and for fear of any omiſſion or miſtake, he entered, in the great catalogue, the title page of it, with his own hand. It appears from his correſpondence with Mr. Warton, that he " intended, in the winter 1755, to open a *Biblio-*

theque, or Literary Journal, to be intituled, *The Annals of Literature, Foreign as well as Domeſtic*, for which he had made ſome proviſion of materials; but the ſcheme was dropped.

Having ſpent, during the progreſs of the work, the money for which he had contracted to write his *Dictionary*, he was ſtill under the neceſſity of exerting his talents, "in making proviſion for the day that was paſſing over him." The ſubſcriptions taken in for his edition of *Shakſpeare*, and the profits of his miſcellaneous eſſays, were now his principal reſource for ſubſiſtence; and it appears from the following letter to Richardſon, dated Gough-Square, March 16. 1756, that they were inſufficient to ward off the diſtreſs of an arreſt, on a particular emergency.

"I am obliged to entreat your aſſiſtance; I am now under an arreſt for five pounds eighteen ſhillings. Mr. Strahan, from

whom I ſhould have received the neceſſary help, in this caſe, is not at home, and I am afraid of not finding Mr. Millar. If you could be ſo good as to ſend me this ſum, I will very gratefully repay you, and add it to all former obligations." In the margin of this letter, there is a memorandum in theſe words:—" March 16. 1756. Sent ſix guineas. Witneſs William Richardſon."

" For the honour of an admired writer," ſays Mr. Murphy, " it is to be regretted that we do not find a more liberal entry." This anecdote may appear to ſupport the parſimony of the author, whoſe hero gives moſt profuſely; but ſomething may ſtill be ſaid in favour of Richardſon. All that Johnſon aſked was a temporary ſupply; and that was granted. There was certainly no oſtentatious liberality; but a kind action ſeems to have been done, without delay, and without grudging.

In 1756, he publiſhed an abridgment of his *Dictionary*, in 2 vols, 8vo, and contributed to a publication called "The Univerſal Viſitor," for the aſſiſtance of Smart, one of the ſtated undertakers, with whoſe unhappy vacillation of mind he ſincerely ſympathized, all the eſſays marked with two *aſteriſks*; except the "Life of Chaucer," "Reflections on the ſtate of Portugal," and "Eſſay on Architecture," which want all the characteriſtical marks of his compoſition. "Further thoughts on Agriculture," being the ſequel of a very inferior eſſay on the ſame ſubject," "A Diſſertation on the State of Literature and Authors," and "A Diſſertation on the Epitaphs written by Pope," though not marked in the ſame manner, appear to be the production of Johnſon. The laſt of theſe, indeed, he afterwards added to his *Idler*.

He engaged alſo to ſuperintend and contribute largely to another monthly publi-

cation, intituled, " The Literary Magazine, or Univerſal Review ;" the firſt number of which came out on the 15th of May this year. He continued to write in it, with intermiſſions, till the 15th number. His original eſſays are, " The Preliminary Addreſs," " An Introduction to the Political State of Great Britain," " Remarks on the Militia Bill," " Obſervations on his Britannic Majeſty's Treaties with the Empreſs of Ruſſia, and the Landgrave of Heſſe Caſſel," " Obſervations on the Preſent State of Affairs," and " Memoirs of Frederick II. King of Pruſſia." His reviews of the works of others are, " Birch's Hiſtory of the Royal Society," " Murphy's Gray's-Inn Journal," " Warton's Eſſay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, vol. 1ſt." " Hampton's Tranſlation of Polybius," " Blackwell's Memoirs of the Court of Auguſtus," " Ruſſel's Natural Hiſtory of Aleppo," " Sir Iſaac New-

ton's Arguments in proof of a Deity," " Borlaſe's Hiſtory of the Iſles of Scilly," " Home's Experiments on Bleaching," " Brown's Chriſtian Morals," " Hales on Diſtilling Sea-Water, &c." " Lucas's Eſſay on Waters," " Keith's Catalogue of the Scottiſh Biſhops," " Browne's Hiſtory of Jamaica," " Philoſophical Tranſactions, vol. 49th," " *Mrs. Lenox's Tranſlation of Sully's Memoirs*," " Miſcellanies by Elizabeth Harriſon," " Evans's Map, and Account of the Middle Colonies in America," " *Letter on the Caſe of Admiral Byng*," " *Appeal to the People concerning Admiral Byng*," " *Hanway's Eight Day's Journey, and Eſſay on Tea*," " The Cadet, a Military Treatiſe," " *Some further Particulars in relation to the Caſe of Admiral Byng, by a Gentleman of Oxford*," " The Conduct of the Miniſtry relating to the preſent War, impartially examined," and " *Jenyns's Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.*"

Mr. Davies, in his " Miſcellaneous and Fugitive Pieces," has aſcribed to him the " Review of Burke's Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime," and Sir John Hawkins has inſerted it in his collection of Johnſon's works; but it was written by Mr. Murphy. In his original eſſays, he diſplays extenſive political knowledge, expreſſed with uncommon energy and perſpicuity. Some of his reviews are very ſhort accounts of the pieces noticed; but many of them are examples of elaborate criticiſm, in the moſt maſterly ſtyle, particularly the review of Jenyns's " Inquiry into the Origin of Evil." In his defence of Tea, againſt Mr. Hanway's violent attack upon that popular beverage, he deſcribes himſelf as " a hardened and ſhameleſs tea-drinker, who has for many years diluted his meals with only the infuſion of this facinating plant; whoſe kettle has ſcarcely time to cool; who with tea a-

muſes the evening, with tea ſolaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning," *te veniente die, te decedente.* Mr. Hanway wrote an angry anſwer to Johnſon's review of his "Eſſay;" and Johnſon, after a full and deliberate pauſe, made a reply to it; the only inſtance in the whole courſe of his life, when he condeſcended to oppoſe any thing that was written againſt him. Of the good Mr. Hanway he ſaid, "He is a man whoſe failings may be well pardoned for his virtues."

The ſame year he gave an edition of Sir Thomas Browne's "Chriſtian Morals," with his *Life* prefixed to it, which is one of his beſt biographical performances. He wrote alſo a *Dedication* and *Preface to the Earl of Rochford*, to Payne's "Eſſay on the Game of Draughts," and accepted of a guinea from Dodſley, for writing the *Introduction* to "The London Chronicle;"

and even in ſo ſlight a performance exhibited peculiar talents. At the ſame time he iſſued *Propoſals* of conſiderable length for his edition of *Shakſpeare*, with Notes; and his fancied activity was ſuch, that he promiſed his work ſhould be publiſhed before Chriſtmas 1757, though it was nine years before it ſaw the light.

About this period, he was offered by Mr. Langton, the father of his much valued friend, a living of conſiderable value in Lincolnſhire, if he would accept it and take orders; "but he choſe not to put off his lay habit." This year the Ivy-Lane club was diſſolved, by the diſperſion of the members.

In 1757, it does not appear that he publiſhed any things, except ſome of thoſe eſſays in the "Literary Magazine," which have been mentioned. That magazine, after he ceaſed to write in it, gradually declined; and in July 1758, it expired.

He dictated, this year, a " Speech on the Subject of an Addreſs to the Throne," after the expedition to Rochefort, which was delivered by one of his friends in a public meeting. It is printed in the " Gentleman's Magazine" for October 1785.

On the 15th of April 1758, he began *The Idler*, which came out every Saturday, in a weekly newſpaper called the " Univerſal Chronicle," publiſhed by Newbery, and was continued till April 5th 1760. Of 103, the total number of eſſays, twelve were contributed by his friends; of which Nos. 33, 93. and 96, were written by Mr. Warton, No. 67 by Mr. Langton, and Nos. 76, 79, and 82, by Sir Joſhua Reynolds; the concluding words of No. 82, " and pollute his canvaſs with deformity," being added by Johnſon. *The Idler* is evidently the work of the ſame mind which produced the *Rambler*, but has leſs body and more ſpirit. It has more variety of

real life, and greater facility of language. Yet Nos. 14, 24, 41, 43, 51, 52, 58, and 89, ſhow as much profundity of thought, and labour of language, as any of his writings. To *The Idler*, when collected in volumes, he added (beſide the *Eſſay on Epitaphs*, and the *Diſſertation* on thoſe of Pope), an *Eſſay on the Bravery of the Engliſh common Soldiers.*

In January 1759, his mother died, at the age of ninety; an event which deeply affected him. He regretted his not having gone to viſit her for ſeveral years previous to her death; but he had long contributed liberally to her ſupport.

Soon after this event, he wrote his *Raſſelas, Prince of Abyſſinia*, that, with the profits, he might defray the expence of his mother's funeral, and pay ſome little debts which ſhe had left. He told Sir Joſhua Reynolds, that he compoſed it in the evenings of one week, ſent it to the preſs in

portions as it was written, and had never ſince read it over. He received for the copy 100l. and 25l. when it came to a ſecond edition. The applauſe given to the hiſtory of *Raſſelas*, has been ſuch, as muſt ſatisfy an author the moſt avaricious of fame. It has been tranſlated into various modern languages, and received the admiration of Europe.

During all this year, he carried on his *Idler*, and was proceeding, though ſlowly, in his edition of *Shakſpeare*. He, however, found time to tranſlate for Mrs. Lenox's Engliſh verſion of Brumoy's "Greek Theatre," "A Diſſertation on the Greek Comedy," and the general "concluſion" of the book. On the controverſy ariſing concerning the eliptical or circular form of arches for Blackfriar's bridge, Johnſon engaged in it, on behalf of his friend Mr. Gwyn, and wrote *three letters* in the "Gazetteer," in oppoſition to the eliptical ſide

of the queſtion; but without any illiberal antipathy to Mr. Mylne, with whom he afterwards lived upon very agreeable terms of acquaintance.

While he was employed in writing *The Idler*, he quitted his houſe in Gough-Square, and retired to Gray's-Inn; and ſoon after Miſs Williams went to lodgings. This year he removed to chambers in the Inner-Temple Lane, "where he lived," ſays Mr. Murphy, "in poverty, total idleneſs, and the pride of literature, *Magni ſtat nominis umbra*. Mr. Fitzherbet (the father of Lord St. Helens), uſed to ſay, that he paid a morning viſit to Johnſon, intending from his chambers to ſend a letter into the city; but, to his great ſurpriſe, he found an author by profeſſion, without pen, ink, or paper."

His black ſervant Francis Barber having left him, and entered on board a man of war, "he was humble enough to deſire

the aſſiſtance" of Smollet in procuring his releaſe. Smollet made intereſt through Mr. Wilkes; and he was diſcharged without any wiſh of his own, in the latter end of 1759, and returned to his maſter's ſervice.

In 1760, he wrote the " Addreſs of the Painters to George III. on his acceſſion;" an " Introduction" to the proceedings of the Committee for Clothing the French Priſoners; the " Dedication" for Mr. Baretti, of his " Italian and Engliſh Dictionary," to the Marquis of Abreu, the Spaniſh ambaſſador; and an *Account of Mr. Tytler's Vindication of Mary Queen of Scots*, in the Gentleman's Magazine for October.

This year Mr. Murphy having thought himſelf ill treated by Dr. Franklin, in his " Diſſertation on Tragedy," publiſhed an indignant vindication in " A Poetical Epiſtle to Samuel Johnſon, A. M." in which he complimented Johnſon in a juſt and

elegant manner. This epiſtle has been reprinted, with conſiderable alterations and additions, in the collection of his works, in 7 vols, 8vo, 1786. As an ingenious, an elegant, and moral writer, Mr. Murphy is entitled to rank in a ſuperior claſs. In collecting his works, it is to be regretted that he ſhould have taken ſo much pains to reſcue from oblivion this epiſtle, written during the violence of literary diſſention, and which bears evident marks of an exaſperated mind. The expulſion of the reſpectable names of Dr. Warton and Mr. Maſon from their former places, cannot eaſily be defended upon any other ground than caprice, or perſonal diſlike.

An acquaintance firſt commenced between Johnſon and Mr. Murphy in the following manner: During the publication of his "Gray's-Inn Journal," Mr. Murphy happened to be in the country

with Foote, and having mentioned that he was obliged to go to London to get ready for the preſs one of the numbers, Foote ſaid to him, " You need not go on that account: Here is a French magazine, in which you will find a very pretty oriental tale; tranſlate that, and ſend it to your printer." Mr. Murphy having read the tale, was highly pleaſed with it, and followed Foote's advice. When he returned to town, this tale was pointed out to him in the *Rambler*, from whence it had been tranſlated into the French Magazine. Mr. Murphy then waited upon Johnſon, to explain this curious incident; and a friendſhip was formed, that continued without interruption till the death of Johnſon.

In 1761, he wrote for the bookſellers the " Preface" to Rolt's Dictionary of Trade and Commerce; which diſplays a

clear and comprehenſive knowledge of the ſubject, though he " never (as he ſaid) ſaw the man, and never read the book." He alſo corrected a pamphlet written by Mr. Gwyn, intituled, " Thoughts on the Coronation of George III.," and wrote for Mr. Newbery the *Introduction* to a Collection of Voyages and Travels publiſhed by him, under the title of " The World Diſplayed," which contains, in a pleaſing ſtyle, the hiſtory of navigation, and the diſcovery of America and the Iſlands of the Weſt Indies.

In 1762, he wrote for Dr. Kennedy, in a ſtrain of very courtly elegance, *A Dedication to the King*, of his " Complete Syſtem of Aſtronomical Chronology," " Dedication" for Mrs. Lenox, to the Earl of Middleſex, of her " Female Quixotte," and the " Preface" to the " Catalogue of the Artiſt's Exhibition."

In this year, Fortune, who had hitherto left him to ſtruggle with the inconveniences of a precarious ſubſiſtence, ariſing entirely from his own labours, gave him that independence which his talents and virtues long before ought to have obtained for him. In the month of July he was graced with a penſion of 300l. *per annum*, by the King, as a recompence for the honour which the excellence of his writings, and the benefit which their moral tendency had been of to theſe kingdoms. He obtained it by the interference of Lord Bute, then firſt Lord Commiſſioner of the Treaſury, upon the ſuggeſtion of Mr. Wedderburn, now Lord Loughborough, at the inſtance of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Murphy. For this independence he paid the uſual tax. Envy and reſentment ſoon made him the mark to ſhoot their arrows at. Some appeared to think themſelves more entitled to royal favour, and others recollected his

political opinions, and ſentiments of the reigning family. By ſome he was cenſured as an apoſtate, and by others ridiculed for becoming a penſioner. The "North Briton" ſupplied himſelf with arguments againſt the Miniſter for rewarding a Tory and a Jacobite, and Churchill ſaterized his political verſatility with the moſt poignant ſeverity.

How to all principles untrue,
Not fix'd to old friends, nor to new;
He damns the penſion which he takes,
And loves the Stuart he forſakes.

By this acceptance of the King's bounty, he had undoubtedly ſubjected himſelf to the appellation of a penſioner, to which he had annexed an ignominious definition in his *Dictionary*. He had received a favour from two Scotchmen, againſt whoſe country he had joined in the rabble cry of indiſcriminating invective. It was thus that even-handed Juſtice commended the

poiſoned chalice to his own lips, and compelled him to an awkward, though not unpleaſant penance, for indulging in a ſplenetic prejudice, equally unworthy of his underſtanding and his heart.

The affair itſelf was equally honourable to the giver and the receiver. The offer was clogged with no ſtipulations for party ſervices, and accepted under no implied idea of being recompenſed by political writings. It was perfectly underſtood by all parties, that the penſion was merely honorary. It is true that Johnſon did afterwards write political pamphlets in favour of adminiſtration; but it was at a period long ſubſequent to the grant of his penſion, and in ſupport of a miniſter to whom he owed no perſonal obligation. It was for the eſtabliſhment of opinions, which, however unconſtitutional, he had uniformly held, and publicly avowed.

In 1763, he furniſhed to " The Poetical Calendar," publiſhed by Fawkes and Woty, a *Character of Collins*, which he afterwards engrafted into his entire *Life of Collins*. He alſo favoured Mr. Hoole with the *Dedication* of his tranſlation of Taſſo to the Queen.

This year Mr. Boſwell was introduced to Johnſon, by Mr. Davies the bookſeller, and continued to live in the greateſt intimacy with him from that time till his death.

Churchill, in his " Ghoſt," availed himſelf of the common opinion of Johnſon's credulity, and drew a caricature of him, under the name of *Pompoſo;* repreſenting him as one of the believers of the ſtory of a ghoſt in Cock-Lane, which, in 1762, had gained very general credit in London. Johnſon made no reply; " for with other wiſe folks he ſat up with the ghoſt." Poſterity muſt be allowed to ſmile at the cre-

dulity of that period. Contrary, however, to the common opinion of Johnſon's credulity, Mr. Boſwell aſſerts that he was a principal agent in detecting the impoſture; and undeceived the world, by publiſhing an account of it in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for January 1762. Yet, by the circumſtances of the examination, he ſeems to have gone with almoſt a willingneſs to believe, and a mind ſcarcely in ſuſpenſe. He would have been glad to ſee a traveller from that undiſcovered country, over which, like the reſt of mankind, he ſaw nothing but clouds and darkneſs.

In one of the *converſations* at the Mitre Tavern this year, Mr. Boſwell relates the following inſtance of Johnſon's profound and liberal way of thinking, on a very nice conſtitutional point, which may, in ſome meaſure, render people cautious of pronouncing deciſively on his political creed.

Goldſmith diſputed very warmly with Johnſon, againſt the well known maxim of the Britiſh conſtitution, "The king can do no wrong," affirming, that what was morally falſe, could not be politically true; and as the king might, in the exerciſe of his regal power, command, and cauſe the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be ſaid, in ſenſe and in reaſon, that he *could* do wrong." *Johnſon.* "Sir, you are to conſider, that in our conſtitution, according to its true principles, the king is the head, he is ſupreme, he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore it is, Sir, that we hold the king can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being aſcribed to majeſty. Redreſs is always to be had againſt oppreſſion, by puniſhing the immediate agents. The king, though he ſhould command, cannot force

a judge to condemn a man unjuſtly; therefore it is the judge whom we proſecute and puniſh. Political inſtitutions are formed on the conſideration of what will moſt frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus, it is better that a nation ſhould have a ſupreme legiſlative power, although it may at times be abuſed. And then, Sir, there is this conſideration, that, *if the abuſe be enormous, nature will riſe up, and claiming her original right, overturn a corrupt political ſyſtem.*"

"This generous ſentiment," Mr. Boſwell adds, "which he uttered with great fervour, ſtruck me exceedingly, and ſtirred my blood to that pitch of fancied reſiſtance, the poſſibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which, I truſt, I ſhall never be forced."

In this year, he alſo wrote the "Life of Aſcham," and the "Dedication to the Earl

of Shaftſbury," prefixed to the edition of his Engliſh works, publiſhed by Mr. Bennet.

To enlarge his circle, and to find opportunities for converſation, Johnſon once more had recourſe to a club. In February 1764, was founded that club, which afterwards became diſtinguiſhed by the title of the LITERARY CLUB. Sir Joſhua Reynolds was the firſt propoſer, to which Johnſon acceded; and the original members were, beſide himſelf, Sir Joſhua Reynolds, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Mr. Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, and Goldſmith. They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerard Street, Soho, on every Monday evening through the year.

He wrote this year "A Review" of Grainger's "Sugar Cane," in the "London Chronicle," in conjunction with Dr. Percy; and an account of Goldſmith's "Traveller," in the "Critical Review."

About this time, he was afflicted with a ſevere return of the hypochondriac diſorder, which was ever lurking about him. He was ſo ill as to be entirely averſe to ſociety, the moſt fatal ſymptom of that malady.

The ſucceeding year, 1765, was remarkable for the commencement of his acquaintance with Henry Thrale, Eſq. one of the moſt eminent brewers in England, and member of parliament for Southwark. Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having ſpoken very highly of Johnſon's converſation, he was requeſted to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnſon, he accepted an invitation to dinner at Mr. Thrale's, and was ſo much pleaſed with his reception, both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they ſo much pleaſed with him, that his invitations to their houſe were more and more frequent; till at laſt, in 1776, he became one of the fa-

mily; and an apartment was appropriated to him, both in their houſe in Southwark, and in their villa at Streatham.

Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnſon than this connection. He had at Mr. Thrale's all the comforts, and even the luxuries of life; his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits leſſened, by aſſociation with an agreeable and well-ordered family. He was treated with the utmoſt reſpect, and even affection. Johnſon had a very ſincere eſteem for Mr. Thrale, as a man of excellent principles, a good ſcholar, well-ſkilled in trade, of a ſound underſtanding, and of manners ſuch as preſented the character of a plain independent Engliſh 'ſquire. He underſtood and valued Johnſon, without remiſſion, from their firſt acquaintance to the day of his death. Of Mrs. Thrale, now Mrs. Piozzi, a lady of lively parts, improved by education, "leſs cannot be ſaid," ſays Mr. Tyers, "than

that in one of the latter opinions of Johnſon." "If ſhe was not the wifeſt woman in the world, ſhe was undoubtedly one of the wittieſt." She took ſuch care of him, during an illneſs of ſome continuance, that Goldſmith told her, " he owed his life to her attention." " To a natural vivacity in converſation, ſhe had reading enough, and the gods had made her poetical." The vivacity of Mrs. Thrale's literary talk rouzed him to cheerfulneſs and attention, even when they were alone. But this was not often the caſe; for he found here a conſtant ſucceſſion of what gave him the higheſt enjoyment. The ſociety of the learned, the witty, and the eminent in every way, who were aſſembled in numerous companies, called forth his wonderful powers, and gratified him with admiration, to which no man could be inſenſible.

There is ſomething in the conduct of this worthy poſſeſſor of wealth, which the mind

loves to contemplate. Next to the poſſeſſion of great powers, the moſt enviable qualities, are a capacity to diſcover, and an inclination to honour them. To the credit of Thrale, let it be recorded, that the patron of literature and talents, of which Johnſon ſought in vain for the traces in Cheſterfield, he found realized in Thrale.

In July of this year, he was complimented by the Univerſity of Dublin with the degree of Doctor of Laws, as the *Diploma* expreſſes it, *ob egregiam ſcriptorem elegantiam et utilitatem*, though he does not appear to have taken the title in conſequence of it. In October, he at length gave to the world his edition of *The Plays of William Shakſpeare, with the Corrections and Illuſtrations of various Commentators; to which are added, Notes by Sam. Johnſon*, 8vo; which, as far as it fell ſhort of affording that ample ſatisfaction which was expected from it, may be aſcribed to his not having "read the books

which the author read, traced his knowledge to the ſource, and compared his copies with their originals;" a promiſe he gave, but was not able to perform. Sir John Hawkins thinks it a meagre work; he complains of the paucity of the notes, of Johnſon's want of induſtry, and indeed unfitneſs for the office of a Scholiaſt. It was treated with great illiberality by Dr. Kenrick, in the firſt part of a "Review" of it, which was never completed. It is to be admitted, that he has neither ſo fully reformed the text, by accurate collations of the firſt editions, nor ſo fairly illuſtrated his author, in his notes, by quotations from the "writers who lived at the ſame time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him," as has been done by other able and ingenious critics, who have followed him; Mr. Steevens, Mr. Capel, Mr. Malone, Mr. Reed, &c. whoſe labours have left little to add to the commentaries on

Shakſpeare. But what he did as a commentator, has no ſmall ſhare of merit, though his reſearches were not ſo ample, and his inveſtigations ſo acute as they might have been. He has enriched his edition with a conciſe account of each play, and of its characteriſtic excellence. In the ſagacity of his emendatory criticiſms, and the happineſs of his interpretations of obſcure paſſages, he ſurpaſſes every editor of this poet. Mr. Malone confeſſes, "that Johnſon's vigorous and comprehenſive underſtanding threw more light on his author, than all his predeceſſors had done." His *Preface* has been pronounced by Mr. Malone, to be the fineſt compoſition in our language; and having regard to its ſubject and extent, it certainly would be difficult to name one poſſeſſing a ſuperior claim to ſuch ſuperlative praiſe. Whether we conſider the beauty and vigour of its compoſition, the abundance and claſſical ſelec-

tion of its alluſions, the juſtneſs of the general precepts of criticiſm, and its accurate eſtimate of the excellencies or defects of his author, it is equally admirable. He ſeems to raiſe his talents upon a level with thoſe of his poet, upon whoſe works he ſits as a critical judge, to rival, by the luſtre of his praiſes, the ſplendour of the original, and to follow this eagle of Britiſh poetry through all his gyres, with as keen an eye, and upon as ſtrong a wing. The *Preface* to his *Dictionary*, correct as it is, muſt yield the palm of excellence to that prefixed to his Shakſpeare; but it yields it only becauſe the ſubject was leſs favourable to the full diſplay of his powers.

In 1766, he removed from the Inner-Temple Lane, to a good houſe in Johnſon's Court, Fleet Street, in which he accommodated Miſs Williams with an apartment on the ground floor, while Mr. Levett occupied his poſt in the garret.

This year he only wrote the *Dedication to the King*, of Gwyn's "London and Weſtminſter Improved," and furniſhed the *Preface*, and the following pieces for Miſs Williams's "Miſcellanies in Proſe and Verſe," 4to: *The Ant*; "To Miſs ——, on her giving the Author a Gold and Silk Network Purſe of her own weaving;" "The Happy Life;" *On the Death of Stephen Gray, the Electrician*; and "The Fountains," a Fairy Tale, in Proſe. The firſt ſketch of the poem on *Stephen Gray*, was written by Miſs Williams, but Johnſon told Mr. Boſwell, "that he wrote it all over again, except two lines." This publication was encouraged by a genteel ſubſcription.

In 1767, he only wrote the *Dedication to the King*, for Mr. Adams's "Treatiſe on the Globes." In February, he was honoured by a private converſation with the king, in the library at Buckingham Houſe, "which gratified his monarchic enthuſiaſm." The

interview was ſought by the king without the knowledge of Johnſon. His majeſty, among other things, aſked the author of ſo many valuable works, if he intended to publiſh any more? Johnſon modeſtly anſwered, that he thought he had written enough. "And ſo ſhould I too," replied the king, "if you had not written ſo well." Johnſon was highly pleaſed with his majeſty's courteouſneſs; and afterwards obſerved to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are thoſe of as fine a gentleman as we may ſuppoſe Lewis XIV. or Charles II."

Johnſon had now arrived at that eminence which is the prize that cultivated genius always ſtruggles for, and but ſeldom obtains. His fortune, though not great, was adequate to his wants, and of moſt honourable acquiſition; for it was derived from the produce of his labours, and the rewards which his country had beſtowed upon merit. He received during life that

unqualified applauſe from the world, which is in general paid only to departed excellence, and he beheld his fame ſeated firmly in the public mind, without the danger of its being ſhaken by obloquy, or the hazard of its being ſhared by a rival. He could number among his friends the greateſt and moſt improved talents of the country. His company was courted by wealth, dignity, and beauty. His many peculiarities were overlooked, or forgotten in the admiration of his underſtanding; while his virtues were regarded with veneration, and his opinions adopted with ſubmiſſion. Of the uſual inſenſibility of mankind to living merit, Johnſon, at leaſt, had no reaſon to complain.

In 1768, nothing of his writing was given to the public, except the *Prologue* to his friend Goldſmith's comedy of the "Good Natured Man."

In 1769, he was altogether quieſcent as an author. On the eſtabliſhment of the Royal Academy this year, he accepted the title of Profeſſor of Ancient Literature.

In 1770, he publiſhed a political pamphlet, intituled *The Falſe Alarm*, 8vo.; intended to juſtify the conduct of miniſtry, and their majority in the Houſe of Commons, for having virtually aſſumed it as an axiom, that the expulſion of a member of parliament was equivalent to excluſion, and their having declared Colonel Luttrel to be duly elected for the county of Middleſex, notwithſtanding Mr. Wilkes had a great majority of votes. This being very juſtly conſidered as a groſs violation of the right of election, an alarm for the conſtitution extended itſelf all over the kingdom. To prove this alarm to be falſe, was the purpoſe of Johnſon's pamphlet; but his arguments and eloquence failed of effect, and the Houſe of Commons has ſince eraſed the

offenſive reſolution from the journals. This pamphlet has great merit in point of language; but it contains much groſs miſrepreſentation, and much malignity, and abounds with ſuch arbitrary principles, as are totally inconſiſtent with a free conſtitution.

The next year, 1771, he defended the meaſures adopted by the miniſtry, in the diſpute with the court of Spain, in a pamphlet, intituled *Thoughts on the late Tranſactions reſpecting Falkland's Iſland*, 8vo. On the ſubject of Falkland's Iſlands, ſpots "thrown aſide from human uſe, barren in ſummer, and ſtormy in winter," he appears to have followed the direction, and adopted the opinions which a puſillanimous adminiſtration wiſhed to inculcate. They were certainly erroneous in a political view; and if they were his own, ſhow, that on ſuch ſubjects he was incapable of forming a juſt opinion. His deſcription of

the miſeries of war, in this pamphlet, is a fine piece of eloquence; and his character of *Junius* is executed with all the force of his genius, and with the higheſt care.

When Johnſon ſhone in the plenitude of his political glory, from the celebrity of his miniſterial pamphlets, an attempt was made to bring him into the Houſe of Commons, by Mr. Strahan, the king's printer, who was himſelf in parliament, and wrote to the ſecretary of the treaſury upon the ſubject; but the application was unſucceſsful. Whether there were any particular reaſons for the refuſal, has not tranſpired. That Johnſon very much wiſhed to "try his hand" in the ſenate, he has himſelf declared; but that he would have ſucceeded as a parliamentary ſpeaker, is at leaſt doubtful. Few have diſtinguiſhed themſelves as orators, who have not begun the practice of ſpeaking in public early in life; and it may be doubted whether the habits

of regular and correct compoſition are not unfavourable to that quick unpremeditated elocution, which is ſo much admired, and ſo uſeful in animated debate. This at leaſt is certain, that of the many perſons eminent for literary abilities, who have had ſeats in parliament, none have gained a reputation for eloquence commenſurate with their talents and information; and of Johnſon, in particular, it is reported upon the authority of Sir William Scott, that he had ſeveral times tried to ſpeak in the Society of Arts, &c. but "had found that he could not get on." It was obſerved by the late Henry Flood, Eſq. who was himſelf an eminent orator, that "Johnſon having been long uſed to ſententious brevity, and the ſhort flights of converſation, might have failed in that continued and expanded kind of argument, which is requiſite in ſtating complicated matters in public ſpeaking."

In 1772, he produced no literary performance. His only publication in 1773, was a new edition of his *Dictionary*, with additions and corrections. In the autumn of 1773, he gratified a "wiſh which he had ſo long entertained, that he ſcarcely remembered how it was formed, of viſiting the Hebrides, or Weſtern Iſlands of Scotland." He was accompanied by Mr. Boſwell, "whoſe acuteneſs," he afterwards obſerved, "would help his inquiry, and whoſe gaiety of converſation, and civility of manners, were ſufficient to counteract the inconveniencies of travel in countries leſs hoſpitable than thoſe they were to paſs."

His ſtay in Scotland was from the 18th of Auguſt, till the 22d of November, when he ſet out on his return to London. His various adventures, and the force and vivacity of his mind, as exerciſed during his tour, have been deſcribed by Mr. Boſwell, in his "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,"

8vo, 1786, in a ſtyle that ſhows he poſſeſſed, in an eminent degree, the ſkill to give connection to miſcellaneous matter, and vivacity to the whole of his narrative.

At the approach of the general election, in 1774, he publiſhed a ſhort political pamphlet, intituled, *The Patriot; addreſſed to the Electors of Great Britain*, 8vo, not with any viſible application to Mr. Wilkes, but to teach the people to reject the leaders of oppoſition, who called themſelves patriots. It was called for, he tells us, by his political friends, on Friday, and was written on Saturday.

The firſt effort of his pen, in 1775, was "Propoſals for publiſhing by ſubſcription, the works of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, in 3 vols. 4to." which was ſoon ſucceeded by a pamphlet, intituled, *Taxation no Tyranny, An Anſwer to the Reſolutions and Addreſs of the American Congreſs*, 8vo. The ſcope of the argument was, that diſtant colonies

which had in their aſſemblies a legiſlature of their own, were, notwithſtanding, liable to be taxed in a Britiſh Parliament, where they had neither peers in one houſe, nor repreſentatives in the other. The principle has been long abandoned; but Johnſon was of opinion, that this country was ſtrong enough to enforce obedience; "When," ſays he "an Engliſhman is told that the Americans ſhoot up like a hydra, he naturally conſiders how the hydra was deſtroyed." The event has ſhown how much he was miſtaken. This pamphlet was written at the deſire of the miniſtry, and in ſome places corrected by them. It contained the ſame poſitive aſſertions, ſarcaſtical ſeverity, extravagant ridicule, and arbitrary principles, with his former political pieces, and the groſſeſt and moſt virulent abuſe of the Americans.

Theſe pamphlets were publiſhed on his own account, and were afterwards collect-

ed by him into a volume, under the title of *Political Tracts, by the author of the Rambler*, 8vo, 1775.

In the month of March this year, he was gratified by the title of Doctor of Laws, conferred on him by the Univerſity of Oxford, at the ſolicitation of Lord North. In September he viſited France, for the firſt time, with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and Mr. Baretti; and returned to England in about two months after he quitted it. Foote, who happened to be in Paris at the ſame time, ſaid, that the French were perfectly aſtoniſhed at his figure and manner, and at his dreſs; which was exactly the ſame with what he was accuſtomed to in London: his brown clothes, black ſtockings, and plain ſhirt. Of the occurrences of this tour, he kept a journal, in all probability with a deſign of writing an account of it. The world has to regret, that from

want of leiſure or inclination, he never perfected it.

This year he alſo wrote the Preface to Mr. Baretti's "Leſſons, Italian and Engliſh," and publiſhed an account of his Tour to the Hebrides, under the title of *A Journey to the Weſtern Iſlands of Scotland*, 8vo. This elegant narrative has been variouſly praiſed and abuſed in the newſpapers, magazines, and other fugitive publications. It was formally attacked by the Rev. Donald M'Nicol, in his "Remarks," &c. 8vo. 1780. That it is written with an undue prejudice againſt both the country and people of Scotland, muſt be allowed; but it abounds in extenſive philoſophical views of ſociety, and in ingenious ſentiments and lively deſcription. Among many other diſquiſitions equally inſtructing and amuſing, he expreſſes his diſbelief of the authenticity of the poems of Oſſian, preſented to the public as a tranſlation from the

Erſe, in ſuch terms as honeſt indignation is apt to hurl againſt impoſition. If there was a manuſcript, in what age was it written? and where is it? If it was collected from oral recitation in different parts of the Highlands, who put it together in its preſent form? Theſe, and ſuch like obſervations, provoked the reſentment of Mr. Macpherſon; he ſent a threatening letter to the author, and Johnſon anſwered him in the rough phraſe of ſtern defiance.

" I received your fooliſh and impudent letter. Any violence offered me, I ſhall do my beſt to repel; and what I cannot do for myſelf, the law ſhall do for me. I hope I ſhall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

" What would you have me retract? I thought your book an impoſture; I think it an impoſture ſtill. For this opinion I have given my reaſons to the public, which

I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, ſince your Homer, are not ſo formidable; and what I hear of your morals, inclines me to pay regard not to what you ſhall ſay, but what you ſhall prove. You may print this if you will."

The threats alluded to in this letter never were attempted to be put in execution. But Johnſon, as a proviſion for defence, furniſhed himſelf with a large oaken plant, ſix feet in height, of the diameter of an inch at the lower end, increaſing to three inches at the top, and terminating in a head (once the root) of the ſize of a large orange. This he kept in his bed-chamber, ſo near his chair, as to be within his reach.

In 1776, he wrote nothing for the public. This year he removed from No. 7. Johnſon's Court, to a larger houſe, No. 8. Bolt-Court, Fleet-Street, with a garden, "which he took delight in watering." A

room on the ground-floor was aſſigned to Miſs Williams; and the whole of the two pair of ſtairs floors was made a repoſitory for his books, conſiſting of about 5000 volumes. Here, in the intervals of his reſidence at Streatham, he ſat every morning receiving viſits, and hearing the topics of the day, and indolently trifling away the time; and to the moſt intimate of his friends, Dr. Burney, Mr. Hoole, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Davies, Mr. Baretti, Mr. Boſwell, Mr. Langton, &c. ſometimes gave not inelegant dinners. Chemiſtry afforded ſome amuſement. In Gough-Square, and in Johnſon's-Court, he had an apparatus for that purpoſe; and the ſame, with perhaps a few additions, was now fixed up in Bolt-Court. He had alſo a ſort of laboratory at Streatham, and diverted himſelf with drawing eſſences, and colouring liquors for Mrs. Thrale.

Johnſon's benevolence to the unfortunate, was, at all periods of his life, very remarkable. In his houſe at Bolt-Court, an apartment was appropriated to Mrs. Deſmoulins, daughter of his god-father, Dr. Swinfen, and widow of Mr. Deſmoulins, a writing-maſter, and her daughter, and a Miſs Carmichael. Such was his humanity, and ſuch his generoſity, that he allowed Mrs. Deſmoulins half-a-guinea a-week, which was above a twelfth part of his penſion.

" It ſeems," ſays Mrs. Piozzi, " at once vexatious and comical, to reflect that the diſſenſions thoſe people choſe to live in, diſtreſſed and mortified him exceedingly. He really was oftentimes afraid of going home, becauſe he was ſure to be met at the door with numberleſs complaints; and he uſed frequently to lament pathetically to me, and to Mr. Saſtres, the Italian maſter, who was much his favourite, that they made his

life miſerable, from the impoſſibility he found of making theirs happy; when every favour he beſtowed on one, was wormwood to the reſt. If, however, I ventured to blame their ingratitude, and condemn their conduct, he would inſtantly ſet about ſoftening the one, and juſtifying the other; and finiſhed commonly by telling me, that I knew not to make allowances for ſituations I never experienced:

> To thee no reaſon, who know'ſt only good,
> But evil haſt not try'd. *Milton.*"

In 1777, the fate of Dr. Dodd excited Johnſon's compaſſion, and called forth the ſtrenuous exertion of his vaſt comprehenſive mind. He thought his ſentence juſt; yet, perhaps, fearing that religion might ſuffer from the errors of one of its miniſters, he endeavoured to prevent the laſt ignominious ſpectacle. He wrote for that unhappy man, his *Speech to the Recorder of*

London, at the Old Bailey, when the ſentence of death was about to be pronounced upon him; *The Convict's Addreſs to his unhappy Brethren*, a ſermon delivered by him in the chapel of Newgate; two *Letters*, one to Lord Chancellor Bathurſt, and one to Lord Mansfield; *A Petition from Dr. Dodd to the King; A Petition from Mrs. Dodd to the Queen; Obſervations* in the newſpapers on occaſion of Earl Percy's having preſented a petition for mercy to Dodd, ſigned by twenty thouſand people; *A Petition from the City of London;* and Dr. Dodd's *Laſt Solemn Declaration*, which he left with the ſheriff at the place of execution.

In the ſummer, he wrote a *Prologue* to Kelly's comedy of "A Word to the Wiſe," acted at Covent-Garden Theatre, for one night, for the benefit of the author's widow and children. He alſo made ſome *additions* to the life of Biſhop Pearce (who aſſiſted him with ſome etymologies in the

compilation of his Dictionary), prefixed to his poſthumous works, in 2 vols. 4to, and wrote the *Dedication to the King*.

This year he engaged to write a conciſe account of the *Lives of the Engliſh Poets*, whoſe works were inſerted in an edition undertaken by the London bookſellers, at that time, in oppoſition to the edition of the "Britiſh Poets," printing by the Martins at Edinburgh, and to be ſold by Mr. Bell in London. As a recompence for an undertaking, as he thought, "not very tedious or difficult," he bargained for two hundred guineas; and was afterwards preſented by the proprietors with one hundred pounds. His deſign was only to have allotted to every poet an *Advertiſement*, like that which we find in the French miſcellanies, containing a few dates, and a general character, which would have conferred not much reputation upon the writer, nor have communicated much information to

his readers. Happily for both, " the honeſt deſire of giving uſeful pleaſure," led him beyond his firſt intention. In executing this limited deſign, he found his attention ſo much engaged, that he enlarged his ſcheme, and entered more fully into the merits and value of the principal writers; and produced an ample, rich, and entertaining view of them in every reſpect. The firſt four volumes of this work were publiſhed in 1779, under the title of *Biographical and Critical Prefaces*, and the remaining five in 1781. " Some time in March," he ſays, in his *Meditations*, " I finiſhed the *Lives of the Poets*, which I wrote in my uſual way, dilatorily and haſtily; unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haſte." In a memorandum previous to this, he ſays of them: " Written, I hope, in ſuch a manner, as may tend to the promotion of piety."

In the ſelection of the poets he had no reſponſible concern; but Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden, were inſerted by his recommendation; and Mr. Nichols tells us, he was frequently conſulted during the printing of the collection, and reviſed many of the ſheets.

This was the laſt of Johnſon's literary labours; and though completed when he was in his ſeventy-firſt year, ſhows that his faculties were in as vigorous a ſtate as ever. His judgment and his taſte, his quickneſs in the diſcrimination of motives, and facility of moral reflection, ſhine as ſtrongly in theſe narratives, as in any of his more early performances; and his ſtyle, if not ſo energetic, is at leaſt more ſmoothed down to the taſte of the generality of critical objectors.

The *Lives of the Engliſh Poets* formed a memorable era in Johnſon's life. It is a work which has contributed to immor-

talize his name, and has ſecured that rational eſteem which party or partiality could not procure, and which even the injudicious zeal of his friends has not been able to leſſen.

From the cloſe of his laſt great work, the malady that perſecuted him through life, came upon him with redoubled force. His conſtitution declined faſt, and the fabric of his mind ſeemed to be tottering. The contemplation of his approaching end was conſtantly before his eyes; and the proſpect of death, he declared, was terrible.

On the 4th of May 1781, he loſt his valuable friend Thrale, who appointed him one of his executors, with a legacy of 200l. "I felt," he ſaid, "almoſt the laſt flutter of his pulſe, and looked for the laſt time upon the face that, for fifteen years, had never been turned upon me but with reſpect and benignity." Of his departed

friend he has given a true character in a Latin *Epitaph*, to be ſeen in the church of Streatham.

With Thrale, many of the comforts of Johnſon's life may be ſaid to have expired. In the courſe of 1782, he complains that he "paſſed the ſummer at Streatham, but there was no Thrale." In the ſame year, he received another ſhock. He was ſuddenly deprived of his old domeſtic companion Levett, and paid a tribute to his memory in an affecting and characteriſtic *Elegy*.

The ſucceſſive loſſes of thoſe acquaintances whom kindneſs had rendered dear, or habit made neceſſary to him, reminded Johnſon of his own mortality.

After the death of Thrale, his viſits to Streatham, where he no longer looked upon himſelf as a welcome gueſt, became leſs and leſs frequent; and on the 5th of April 1783, he took his final leave of Mrs. Thrale,

to whom, for near twenty years, he was under the higheſt obligations.

" The original reaſon of our connection," ſays Mrs. Piozzi, in her lively and entertaining " Anecdotes," his *particularly diſordered health and ſpirits*, had been long at an end. Veneration for his virtues, reverence for his talents, delight in his converſation, and habitual endurance of a yoke my huſband firſt put upon me, and of which he contentedly bore his ſhare for ſixteen or ſeventeen years, made me go on ſo long with Mr. Johnſon; but the perpetual confinement, I will own to have been terrifying in the firſt years of our friendſhip, and irkſome in the laſt; nor would I pretend to ſupport it without help, when my coadjutor was no more."

A friendly correſpondence continued, however, between Johnſon and Mrs. Thrale, without interruption, till the ſummer following, when ſhe retired to Bath, and in-

formed him, that ſhe was going to diſpoſe of herſelf in marriage to Signior Piozzi, an Italian muſic maſter. Johnſon, in his relation of executor to her huſband, as alſo in gratitude to his memory, was under an obligation to promote the welfare of his family. He endeavoured, therefore, by prudent counſels and friendly admonition, to prevent that which he thought one of the greateſt evils which could befal the children of his friend, the alienation of the affections of their mother. "The anſwer to his friendly monition," ſays Sir John Hawkins, "I have ſeen; it is written from Bath, and contains an indignant vindication, as well of her conduct as her fame, an inhibition of Johnſon from following her to Bath, and a farewel, concluding, "Till you have changed your opinion of ———, let us converſe no more." In his laſt letter, 8th July 1784, directed to Mrs. *Piozzi*, who then had announced her mar-

riage to him, he ſays, " I breathe out one ſigh more of tenderneſs, perhaps uſeleſs, but at leaſt ſincere." He gives her his beſt advice, and adds, " the tears ſtand in my eyes."

Excluded from the dwelling and family of his friend, he was compelled to return to his own houſe, to ſpend cheerleſs hours among the objects of his bounty, when increaſing age and infirmities had made their company more obnoxious than when he left them, and the ſociety of which he had been recently deprived, rendered him, by compariſon, leſs patient to endure it.

From this time, the narrative of his life is little more than a recital of the preſſures of melancholy and diſeaſe, and of numberleſs excurſions, taken to calm his anxiety, and ſoothe his apprehenſions of the terrors of death, by flying, as it were, from himſelf. He was now doomed to feel all thoſe calamities incident to length of days, which

he had ſo eloquently enumerated in his *Vanity of Human Wiſhes.*

On the 17th of June 1783, he was afflicted with a paralytic ſtroke, which deprived him of ſpeech; from which, however, he gradually recovered; ſo that in July he was able to make a viſit to Mr. Langton, at Rocheſter; and made little excurſions, as eaſily as at any time of his life.

In September, while he was on a viſit at Heale, the ſeat of Mr. Bowles, in Wiltſhire, he loſt Mrs. Williams, whoſe death he lamented with all the tenderneſs which a long connection naturally inſpires. This was another ſhock to a mind like his, ever agitated with the dread of his own diſſolution.

Beſides the palſy, he was all this year afflicted with the gout, as well as with a *ſarcocele*, which he bore with uncommon firmneſs.

In December, he ſought a weak refuge from anxiety, in the inſtitution of a week-

ly club, at the Eſſex Head, in Eſſex Street, then kept by an old ſervant of Mr. Thrale's; but the amuſement which he promiſed himſelf from this inſtitution, was but of ſhort duration.

In the beginning of the year 1784, he was ſeized with a ſpaſmodic aſthma, which was ſoon accompanied by ſome degree of dropſy. From the latter of theſe complaints, however, he was greatly relieved by a courſe of medicine.

The interval of convaleſcence, which he enjoyed during the ſummer, induced him to expreſs a wiſh to viſit Italy. Upon this ſubject, however, his wiſhes had been anticipated by the anxiety of his friends to preſerve his health. His penſion not being deemed by them adequate to ſupport the expence of the journey, application was made to the miniſter, by Mr. Boſwell and Sir Joſhua Reynolds, unknown to Johnſon, through Lord Chancellor Thurlow, for an

augmentation of it, by 200l. The application was unſucceſsful; but the Chancellor, in the handſomeſt manner, offered to let him have 500l. from his own purſe, under the appellation of a loan, but with the intention of conferring it as a preſent. It is alſo to be recorded to the honour of Dr. Brocklesby, that he offered to contribute 100l. per annum, during his reſidence abroad. Johnſon, however, declined both theſe offers, with a gratitude and dignity of ſentiment, riſing almoſt to an equal elevation with the generoſity of Lord Thurlow, and Dr. Brocklesby; and, indeed, he was now approaching faſt to a ſtate in which money could be of no avail.

In the beginning of July, he ſet out on a viſit to Dr. Taylor, at Aſhbourn in Derbyſhire, where his complaints appear to have met with but little alleviation. From Derbyſhire he proceeded to Litchfield, to take a laſt view of his native city. After leaving Litchfield, he viſited Birmingham and

Oxford, and arrived in London on the 16th of November.

The fine and firm feelings of friendſhip which occupied ſo large a portion of Johnſon's heart, were eminently diſplayed, in the many tender interviews which took place between him and his friends in the country, during his excurſion into the North: an excurſion which ſeems to have been undertaken rather from a ſenſe of his approaching diſſolution, and a warm wiſh to bid thoſe he loved a laſt and long farewel, than from any rational hope that air and exerciſe would reſtore him to his former health and vigour.

Soon after his return to London, both the aſthma and dropſy became more violent and diſtreſsful. Eternity preſented to his imagination an awful proſpect, and with as much virtue as in general is the lot of man, he ſhuddered at the approach of his diſſolution. He felt ſtrong perturbations of mind.

His friends endeavoured all in their power to awaken the comfortable reflections of a life well ſpent. They prayed with him; and Johnſon poured out occaſionally the warmeſt effuſions of piety and devotion.

He had for ſome time kept a journal in Latin of the ſtate of his illneſs, and the remedies which he uſed, under the title of *Ægri Ephemeris*, which he began on the 6th July, but continued it no longer than the 8th November, finding, perhaps, that it was a mournful and unavailing regiſter.

His attention to the cauſe of literature was evinced, among other circumſtances, by his communicating to Mr. Nichols a liſt of the original authors of "The Univerſal Hiſtory," mentioning their ſeveral ſhares in that work. It has, according to his direction, been depoſited in the "Britiſh Muſeum," and is printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for December 1784. His integrity was evinced, by paying a ſmall debt

to Mr. Faden, which he had borrowed of his father, and a larger one to Mr. Hamilton. But the queſtion will recur, why were theſe debts ſo long ſuffered to remain? for we cannot ſuppoſe that his mind was ſuddenly enlightened, and his memory renovated.

During his ſleepleſs nights, alſo, he amuſed himſelf by tranſlating into Latin verſe, from the Greek, many of the *Epigrams* in the *Anthologia*.

The ſenſe of his ſituation predominated, and "his affection for his departed relations," ſays Mr. Boſwell, "ſeemed to grow warmer, as he approached nearer to the time when he might hope to ſee them again." In a letter to Mr. Green, at Litchfield, 2d December 1784, he encloſed the *Epitaph* on his father, mother, and brother, and ordered it to be engraved on a ſtone, "deep, maſſy, and hard," and laid on "the exact place of interment," in the middle

aiſle of St. Michael's church. In the Summer he laid a ſtone with a Latin *Epitaph* over his wife in the chapel of Bromley, in Kent.

During his illneſs, he experienced the ſteady and kind attachment of his numerous friends. Nobody was more attentive to him than Mr. Langton, to whom he tenderly ſaid, *Te teneam moriens, deficiente manu.* Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brockleſby, Dr. Warren, Dr. Butter, and Mr. Cruikſhank, generouſly attended him without accepting any fees; and all that could be done from profeſſional ſkill and ability, was done, to prolong a life ſo truly valuable. But his conſtitution was decayed beyond the reſtorative powers of the medical art. Unfortunately for him, he himſelf had a ſmattering of the medical ſcience; and imagining that the dropſical collection of water which oppreſſed him, might be drawn off, by mak-

ing inciſions in the calves of his legs, with his uſual defiance of pain, cut deep, when he thought Mr. Cruikſhank had done it too tenderly. An effuſion of blood followed, which brought on a dozing. Previous to his diſſolution, he burnt indiſcriminately large maſſes of paper, and among others, two quarto volumes, "containing a full and moſt particular Account of his own Life," the loſs of which is much to be regretted. The laſt days of this great man's exiſtence appear to have been unclouded by the gloomy apprehenſions which he had formerly entertained. Full of reſignation, ſtrengthened in faith, and joyful in hope, on the 13th of December, in the evening, being in the 75th year of his age, he reſigned his breath with ſo much compoſure, that his death was only known by the ceaſing of his reſpiration, which had been rendered difficult by debility and aſthma. He was buried in Weſtminſter-Abbey, near the

foot of Shakſpeare's monument, and cloſe to the coffin of his friend Garrick. His funeral was attended by a reſpectable number of his friends; particularly by many of the members of the LITERARY CLUB, who were then in town, and ſeveral of the reverend Chapter of Weſtminſter. His ſchool-fellow and friend, Dr. Taylor, read the funeral ſervice. Agreeable to his own requeſt, a large blue flag-ſtone was placed over his grave, with this inſcription:

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.
Obiit XIII die Decembris
Anno Domini
M DCC LXXXV.
Ætatis ſuæ LXXV.

A monument for Johnſon, in the Cathedral church of St. Paul's, in conjunction with the illuſtrious Howard, was reſolved upon, with the approbation of the Dean and Chapter, in 1789, and has been ſup-

ported by a moſt reſpectable contribution. It is in ſuch forwardneſs, that it is expected to be opened in October 1795.

Having no near relations, he left the bulk of his property, amounting to 1500l. to his faithful ſervant, Francis Barber, whom he looked upon as particularly under his protection, and whom he had all along treated as an humble friend. He appointed Sir Joſhua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. (now Sir) William Scott, his executors.

His death attracted the public attention in an uncommon degree, and was followed by an unprecedented accumulation of literary honours, in the various forms of Sermons, Elegies, Memoirs, Lives, Eſſays, and Anecdotes. A ſermon on that event was preached before the Univerſity of Oxford, by Mr. Augutter; and Dr. Fordyce, in his "Addreſſes to the Deity," 12mo, 1785, and an "Epitaph" printed in the "Gen-

tleman's Magazine" for 1785, paid an elegant and affectionate tribute to his memory. The " Elegy on the Death of Dr. Johnſon," by Samuel Hobhouſe, Eſq. 4to, 1785, was diſtinguiſhed from the maſs of elegiac verſes on that occaſion; and the juſt, diſcriminative, and elegant " Poetical Review of the Moral and Literary Character of Dr. Johnſon," by John Courtenay, Eſq. M. P. 4to, 1788, was peruſed with avidity by the admirers of wit and learning, and the real friends of virtue and liberty. His conduct and genius were examined and illuſtrated in the rapid " Biographical Sketch of Dr. Johnſon," by Thomas Tyers, Eſq. in the " Gentleman's Magazine" for 1784; the ſprightly and entertaining " Anecdotes of Dr. Johnſon," by Mrs. Piozzi, 8vo, 1785; the candid and judicious " Eſſay on the Life, Character, and Writings of Dr. Johnſon," by Joſeph Towers, LL. D. 8vo, 1786; and the inſtructive and inte-

reſting " Life of Samuel Johnſon, LL. D." by James Boſwell, Eſq. 2 vols. 4to, 1791, which are ſufficiently known to the world.

His *Works* were collected and publiſhed by Sir John Hawkins, with his " Life," in eleven volumes, 1787. In this edition, the *Lives of the Poets* are placed firſt, and ſeveral pieces are attributed to Johnſon without foundation. In the " Life," too much foreign matter is intermixed, and Johnſon himſelf is ſcarcely viſible in the maſs. A new edition was publiſhed in 12 vols. 8vo, 1792, with an " Eſſay on his Life and Genius," by Arthur Murphy, Eſq., the former " Life" being thought too unwieldy for republication. In this edition, the order obſerved in the former edition is inverted, and the ſeveral pieces are chronologically arranged, omitting thoſe attributed to him without foundation. Some of his *Prayers* are printed, and ſeveral of his *Letters* added to the 12th volume. Mr. Murphy has

no new facts to embelliſh his work; but the taſk which has been left him, of giving a ſhort, yet full, a faithful, yet temperate hiſtory of Johnſon, has been ably executed. In the ſuccinct review of his writings, Mr. Murphy diſplays his own learning, judgment, and taſte. His *Prayers and Meditations* were publiſhed from his manuſcripts, by George Strahan, A. M. Vicar of Iſlington, in 8vo, 1785. *Letters to and from Samuel Johnſon, LL. D.* were publiſhed by Mrs. Piozzi, in 2 vols. 8vo, 1788. The *Sermons* 8vo, 1790, left for publication, by Dr. Taylor, were unqueſtionably Johnſon's; and the fact is now aſcertained on the authority of Mr. Hayes, the editor. An imperfect collection of his *Poems* was publiſhed by Kearſley, in 12mo, 1785; and inſerted, with conſiderable additions, in the edition of "The Works of the Engliſh Poets," 1790. They are reprinted in the preſent collection, together with the tragedy of

Irene, and ſeveral additional pieces collected from Mr. Boſwell's "Life of Johnſon," and other publications.

The religious, moral, political, and literary character of Johnſon, will be better underſtood by this account of his life, than by any laboured and critical comments. Yet it may not be ſuperfluous here to attempt to collect, into one view, his moſt prominent excellencies, and diſtinguiſhing particularities.

His figure and manner are more generally known than thoſe of almoſt any other man. His perſon was large, robuſt, and unwieldy from corpulency. His carriage was disfigured by ſudden emotions which appeared to a common obſerver to be involuntary and convulſive. But in the opinion of Sir Joſhua Reynolds, they were the conſequence of a depraved habit of accompanying his thoughts with certain untoward actions, which ſeemed as if they were

meant to reprobate ſome part of his paſt conduct. Of his limbs, he is ſaid never to have enjoyed the free and vigorous uſe. When he walked, it ſeemed the ſtruggling gait of one in fetters; and when he rode, he appeared to have no command over his horſe. His ſtrength, however, was great, and his perſonal courage no leſs ſo. Among other inſtances, which exemplify his poſſeſſion of both, it is related, that, being once at the Litchfield theatre, he ſat upon a chair placed for him beſide the ſcenes. Having had occaſion to quit his ſeat, he found it occupied, upon his return, by an innkeeper of the town. He civilly demanded that it ſhould be reſtored to him; but meeting with a rude refuſal, he laid hold of the chair, and with it, of the intruder, and flung them both, without further ceremony, into the pit. At another time, having engaged in a ſcuffle with four men in the ſtreet, he reſolutely refuſed to

yield to ſuperior numbers, and kept them all at bay, until the watch came up and carried him and his antagoniſts to the watch-houſe. In his dreſs he was ſingular and ſlovenly; and though he improved ſomewhat under the lectures of Mrs. Thrale, during his long reſidence at Streatham, yet he was never able completely to ſurmount particularity. He never wore a watch till he was ſixty years of age, and then cauſed one to be made for him by Mudge and Dutton, which coſt him ſeventeen guineas, with this inſcription on the dial-plate, "For the night cometh." He was fond of good company, and of good living; and, to the laſt, he knew of no method of regulating his appetites, but abſolute reſtraint or unlimited indulgence. "Many a day," ſays Mr. Boſwell, "did he faſt; many a year refrain from wine: but when he did eat, it was voraciouſly; when he did drink wine, it was copiouſly. *He could practiſe abſti-*

nence, but not temperance." In converſation, he was rude, intemperate, overbearing, and impatient of contradiction. Addicted to argument, and greedy of victory, he was equally regardleſs of truth and fair reaſoning in his approaches to conqueſt. "There is no arguing with him," ſaid Goldſmith, alluding to a ſpeech in one of Cibber's plays; "for if his piſtol miſſes fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it." In the early part of his life, he had been too much depreſſed; in his latter years, too laviſhly indulged. His temper had at firſt been ſoured by diſappointment and penury, and his petulance was afterwards flattered by univerſal ſubmiſſion. In his converſation and goodneſs of heart, his friends met with a recompenſe for that ſubmiſſion which the ſovereignty of his genius challenged, and his temper exacted from them to the uttermoſt. To great powers, he united a perpetual and ardent deſire to ex-

cel; and even in an argument on the moſt indifferent ſubject, he generally engaged with the whole force and energy of his great abilities. Of his converſation, it is true, all that has been retained by Mr. Boſwell, does not ſeem to be worth recording. Judging of it moſt favourably, it is not much diſtinguiſhed by the flaſhes of wit, or the ſtrokes of humour. Where he appears ſerious, we are not always ſure that he ſpeaks the ſentiments of his conviction. Mr. Boſwell allows that he often talked for victory, and ſometimes took up the weaker ſide, as the moſt ingenious things could be ſaid on it. Truth, and the ableſt defences of truth, are mixed with error, and the moſt ingenious gloſſes which ingenuity could invent, or addreſs enforce. Authors are exalted, or depreciated, as the moment of hilarity or gloom was connected with the ſubject, or as the opinion of the ſpeaker was adverſe; and the whole is given as the ſen-

timent of Johnſon. But for the inferiority of his converſation, to our opinion of the man, he has himſelf made a prophetic apology, in his firſt interview with his biographer, who was deſtined to retail it. "People may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than another man. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertions."

With theſe defects, there was, however, ſcarcely a virtue of which he was not in principle poſſeſſed. He was humane, charitable, affectionate, and generous. His moſt intemperate ſallies were the effects of an irritable habit; he offended only to repent. To the warm and active benevolence of his heart, all his friends have borne teſtimony. "He had nothing," ſays Goldſmith, "of the bear, but his ſkin." Misfortune had only to form her claim, in order to found her right to the uſe of his

purſe, or the exerciſe of his talents. His houſe was an aſylum for the unhappy, beyond what a regard to perſonal convenience would have allowed; and his income was diſtributed in the ſupport of his inmates, to an extent greater than general prudence would have permitted. The moſt honourable teſtimony to his moral and ſocial character, is the cordial eſteem of his friends and acquaintances. He was known by no man by whom his loſs was not regretted. Another great feature of his mind, was the love of independence. While he felt the ſtrength of his own powers, he deſpiſed, except in one inſtance, pecuniary aid. His penſion has been often mentioned, and ſubjected him to ſevere imputations. But let thoſe, who, like Johnſon, had no patrimony, who were not always willing to labour, and felt the conſtant recurrence of neceſſities, reject, without an adequate reaſon, an independent income,

which left his ſentiments free, and requir-ed neither the ſervility of adulation, nor the labours of ſervice. It is not uncom-mon to ſee a deſire to be independent, de-generate into avarice. Johnſon did not feel it early, for his benevolence counter-acted it; but he declined going into Italy, when worth 1500l. beſides his penſion, be-cauſe of the expence; and we ſee the ſurly dignity, which formerly ſpurned at an ob-ligation, relaxed, in his refuſal of Dr. Brock-leſby's aſſiſtance, and Lord Thurlow's very delicate offer of the ſame kind. Some little cenſure is due to him for his eaſy faith, occaſioned by his political prejudices, in the forgeries of Lauder. That he ſhould have appeared in public, in company with this defamer of Milton, is to be lamented. Yet his renunciation of all connection with Lauder, when his forgeries were detected, is only a proof of his having believed (a common weakneſs of worthy minds), with-

out examination, not that he was an accomplice with the impoſtor.

If there is any one trait by which Johnſon's mind can be diſcriminated, it is gigantic vigour. In information and taſte he was excelled; but what he ſeriouſly attempted, he executed with that maſterly original boldneſs, which leaves us to regret his indolence, that he exerted himſelf only in the moment when his powers were wanting, and relapſed again into his literary idleneſs. He united in himſelf what ſeldom are united, a vigorous and excurſive imagination, with a ſtrong and ſteady judgment. His memory was remarkably tenacious, and his apprehenſion wonderfully quick and accurate. He was rather a man of learning than of ſcience. He had accumulated a vaſt fund of knowledge, without much of ſyſtem or methodical arrangement. His reading ſeems to have been caſual, generally deſultory. To converſa-

tion he owed much of his varied knowledge; and to his vigorous comprehenſive powers, he was indebted for that clearneſs of diſtinction, that pointed judicious diſcrimination, which elucidated every queſtion, and aſtoniſhed every hearer. From this caſual reading, he roſe with a mind ſeldom fatigued, endowed with a clear, accurate perception; the variety of his ſtudies relieved, without fatiguing or perplexing him; the ideas arranged in order, were ready for uſe, adorned with all the energy of language, and the force of manner. But the labour of literature was a taſk from which he always wiſhed to eſcape; and as he could excel others without great exertion, we ſeldom perceive his faculties brought forward in their full power. We ſcarcely ſee any attempt, beyond a periodical paper, which he did not profeſſedly continue with laſſitude and fatigue.

He deſerves the character of maſter of the Latin language; but it is eaſy to perceive that his acquaintance with Greek literature was, what it is commonly ſuppoſed to be, general and ſuperficial, rather than curious or profound. Of natural ſcience he knew but little; and moſt of his notions on that branch of philoſophy were obſolete and erroneous. In his writings he appears to have taken more from his own mind than from books, and he diſplays his learning rather in alluſions to the opinions of others, than in the direct uſe of them. Hiſtory he profeſſed to diſregard; yet his memory was ſo tenacious, that we ſeldom find him at a loſs upon any topic, ancient or modern.

From early prejudices, which all his philoſphy and learning could never overcome, he was a zealous and ſcrupulous high-church-man, following to the uttermoſt tenet, the notions of *Laud*, whoſe talents

talents he has praiſed, and whoſe genius he has deplored in his *Vanity of Human Wiſhes*. In his political ſentiments, he was a rank Tory, and till his preſent Majeſty's acceſſion to the throne, a violent Jacobite. He had never examined either his religious or political creed. Bigotted as to a particular ſyſtem of politics, he appears obſtinately to have cloſed his eyes againſt the light of truth; and ſo far from ſeeking information on the ſubject, ſtudiouſly reſiſted it. His piety was truly venerable and edifying. In divinity, however, his reſearches were limited. He was well acquainted with the general evidences of Chriſtianity; but he does not appear to have read his Bible with a critical eye, nor to have intereſted himſelf concerning the elucidation of obſcure or difficult paſſages. It was his favourite maxim, " that the proper ſtudy of mankind is man;" and we muſt confeſs that in all the departments of

moral ſcience, his excellence is unrivalled. His acute penetration was conſtantly alive to " catch the manners living as they riſe," and but few follies or peculiarities could eſcape his obſervation.

The habitual weakneſſes of his mind form a ſtriking and melancholy contraſt to the vigour of his underſtanding. His opinions were tainted with prejudices almoſt too coarſe and childiſh for the vulgar to imbibe. His attachment to the univerſity of Oxford, to which in his youth he owed no great obligations, led him unjuſtly to depreciate the merit of every perſon who had ſtudied at that of Cambridge. His averſion to Whigs, Diſſenters, and Preſbyterians, and his diſlike to Scotland, and many more extravagancies of opinion, that it would be painful to enumerate, inflamed his converſation, and influenced his conduct. He was ſo prone to ſuperſtition as

to make it a rule that a particular foot ſhould conſtantly make the firſt actual movement, when he came cloſe to the threſhold of any door or paſſage, which he was about to enter, or to quit. So deeply was he infected upon this ſubject, that Mr. Boſwell relates that he has often ſeen him "when he had neglected or gone wrong in this ſort of magical movement, go back again, put himſelf in a proper poſture to begin the ceremony, and having gone through it, break from his abſtraction, walk briſkly on, and join his companion." He took off his hat in token of reverence, when he approached the places on which Popiſh churches had formerly ſtood; and bowed before the monaſtic veſtiges. He was ſolicitous to give authenticity to ſtories of apparitions, and eager to credit the exiſtence of a ſecond-ſight, while he appeared ſcrupulous and ſceptical as to particular facts. Theſe mental diſtempers were

the offspring of his melancholic temperament, and were foſtered by ſolitary contemplation, till they had laid fetters upon the imagination too ſtrong for reaſon to burſt through. We ſee it exerted in different circumſtances, and expanding its gloomy influence, till at laſt it terminated little ſhort of inſanity. To this ſtate we muſt attribute his mentioning ſecret tranſgreſſions, his conſtant fear of death, and his religious terrors, not very conſiſtent with his ſtrength of mind, or his conviction of the goodneſs of God. This, at leaſt, ſeems to have been his own opinion of the progreſs of theſe diſeaſes, as appears from his hiſtory of the *Mad Aſtronomer* in *Raſſelas*, the deſcription of whoſe mind he ſeems to have intended as a repreſentation of his own.

But let us turn from theſe foibles and ſingularities, which ſhow him weaker than the generality of his fellow men, and point

to thoſe perfections of mind, which prove him to have been of a rank ſo much above them.

As an author, Johnſon has diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a *philologiſt*, a *biographer*, a *critic*, a *moraliſt*, a *noveliſt*, a *political writer*, and a *poet*.

On his *Dictionary of the Engliſh Language*, it is unneceſſary to enlarge. It is in every body's hands; its utility is univerſally acknowledged; and its popularity is its beſt eulogium. The etymologies, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not entitled to unqualified praiſe. The definitions exhibit aſtoniſhing proofs of acuteneſs of intellect, and preciſion of language. A few of them muſt be admitted to be erroneous. Thus, *Windward* and *Leeward*, though directly of oppoſite meaning, are defined identically the ſame way. The definition of *Net-work* has been often quoted with ſportive malignity, as obſcuring

a thing in itſelf very plain. His introducing his own opinions, and even prejudices, under general definitions of words, as *Tory*, *Whig*, *Penſion*, *Oats*, *Exciſe*, and a few more, muſt be placed to the account of capricious and humourous indulgence. To his liſt of technical and provincial words, nine thouſand have been added by Mr. Herbert Croft, in his "Dictionary of the Engliſh Language;" the publication of which is delayed for want of ſuitable encouragement.

As a *biographer*, his merit is of the higheſt kind. His narration in general is vigorous, connected, and perſpicuous; and his reflections numerous, appoſite, and moral. But it muſt be owned that he neither dwells with pleaſure or ſucceſs upon thoſe minuter anecdotes of life which oftener ſhow the genuine man, than actions of greater importance. Sometimes, alſo, his colourings receive a tinge from preju-

dice, and his judgment is inſenſibly warped by the particularity of his private opinion. Theſe obſervations apply to his *Life of Savage*, the moſt finiſhed of his biographical diſquiſitions; and his *Lives* of ſeveral other eminent men, which were originally printed in the "Gentleman's Magazine," and in other periodical publications, and afterwards collected by Mr. Davies, in his "Miſcellaneous and Fugitive Pieces," and to his *Lives of the Poets*.

As a *critic*, he is entitled to the praiſe of being the greateſt that our nation has produced. He has not, like his prodeceſſors, tried merely to learn the art, and not to feel it. He has not gone to Dacier or to Boſſu, to borrow rules to fetter genius by example, and impart diſtinctions which lead to no end; but, poſſeſſed of two qualities, without which a critic is no more than a caviller, ſtrong ſenſe, and an intimate knowledge of human nature, he has

followed his own judgment, unbiaſſed by authority, and has adopted all the good ſenſe of Ariſtotle, untrammelled by his forms. This praiſe he has merited by his *Preface to Shakſpeare*, and the detached pieces of criticiſm which appear among his works. But his critical powers ſhine with more concentrated radiance in the *Lives of the Poets*. Theſe compoſitions, abounding in ſtrong and juſt illuſtrations of criticiſm, evince the vigour of his mind, and that happy art of moralization, by which he gives to well-known incidents the grace of novelty and the force of inſtruction; and "grapples the attention," by expreſſing common thoughts with uncommon ſtrength and elegance. Of many paſſages, it is ſcarcely hyperbolical to affirm, that they are executed with all the ſkill and penetration of Ariſtotle, and animated and embelliſhed with all the fire of Longinus. The *Lives* of *Cowley*, *Milton*,

Butler, *Waller*, *Dryden*, *Addiſon*, and *Pope*, are elaborately compoſed, and exhibit the nobleſt ſpecimens of entertaining and ſolid criticiſm, that ancient or modern times have produced. The diſſertation in the *Life of Cowley*, on the metaphyſical poets of the laſt century, has all the attraction of novelty, as well as ſound obſervation. In the review of his works, falſe wit is detected in all its ſhapes; and the Gothic taſte for glittering conceits, and far-fetched alluſions, is exploded, never, it is hoped, to revive again. The " Paradiſe Loſt," is a poem which the mind of *Milton* only could have produced; the criticiſm upon it is ſuch as, perhaps, the pen of Johnſon only could have written. His eſtimate of *Dryden* and *Pope*, challenges Quintilian's remarks upon Demoſthenes and Cicero, and rivals the fineſt ſpecimens of elegant compoſition and critical acuteneſs in the Engliſh language. Some caution, however, is

required to peruſe theſe admirable compoſitions with advantage. The preſent writer means not to ſay that they are perfect, or that, on the whole, they are executed with propriety. If they be regarded merely as containing narrations of the lives, delineations of the characters, and ſtrictures of the ſeveral authors, they are far from being always to be depended upon. Johnſon, as he has had occaſion to remark, in reviewing his judgments of the ſeveral poets who have fallen under his conſideration, brought to the production of this work ideas already formed, opinions tinctured with his uſual hues of party and prejudice, and the rigid unfeeling philoſophy, which could neither bend to excuſe failings, or judge of what was not capable of a diſpaſſionate diſquiſition.

To think for himſelf in critical, as in all other matters, is a privilege to which every one is undoubtedly entitled. This privi-

lege of critical independence, an affectation of ſingularity, or ſome other principle not immediately viſible, is frequently betraying into a dogmatical ſpirit of contradiction to received opinion. Of this there need no further proofs, than his almoſt uniform attempt to depreciate the writers of blank verſe, and his degrading eſtimate of the exquiſite compoſitions of Prior, Hammond, Collins, Gray, Shenſtone, and Akenſide, and his pronouncing the "Paradiſe Loſt" "one of thoſe books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take it up again." In his judgments of theſe poets, he may be juſtly accuſed of being inflamed by prejudice, reſolutely blind to merit. His rigorous condemnation, and puerile criticiſms upon Gray, and his faſtidious judgment of Shenſtone, have drawn down upon him the united cenſures of thoſe who admire poetry in her moſt daring attitudes and gorgeous at-

tire, and thoſe who are pleaſed with her modeſt beauties, moſt humble ſteps, and leaſt adorned guiſe. He obſerves of Shenſtone, that he ſet little value upon thoſe parts of knowledge which he had not cultivated himſelf. His own taſte of poetry ſeems in ſome degree regulated by a ſimilar ſtandard; method, ratiocination, and argument, eſpecially if the vehicle be rhyme, often obtaining his regard and commendation, while the bold and enthuſiaſtic, though perhaps irregular flights of imagination, are paſſed by with obſtinate and perverſe indifference. It is not, then, to be wondered at, that the panegyriſt of Blackmore ſhould withhold from Collins and Gray the commendation he has beſtowed on Savage and Yalden; and that his praiſes of the whole claſs of deſcriptive poets are parſimoniouſly beſtowed, and too frigid to make an impreſſion. This is to be attributed to the natural turn of his

mind, and to the bent which his feelings had received from the habits of his life. A certain inelegance of taſte, a frigid churliſhneſs of temper, unſubdued and unqualified by that melting ſenſibility, that divine enthuſiaſm of ſoul, which are eſſential to a hearty reliſh of poetical compoſition, too often counteracted and corrupted the other poetical virtues of his intellect. Poetry pleaſes only as it is the image of reality. He who has never delighted in the ſilent beauties of creation, can feel no emotions, as they are reflected to him in deſcription. Accuſtomed to dogmatize in his cloſet, and ſwelter in ſome alley in the city, Johnſon's mind never throbbed with poetic thrills, as nature expanded her rural glories to his eye; and he preferred the duſt of Fleet-Street, or the windings of the Strand, to the air of Hampſtead, or the beauties of Greenwich.

One general remark may be ventured upon here: Through the whole of his work, the deſire of praiſe, except in the caſe of ſome very favourite author, is almoſt always overpowered by his diſpoſition to cenſure; and while beauties are paſſed over " with the neutrality of a ſtranger, and the coldneſs of a critic," the ſlighteſt blemiſh is examined with microſcopical ſagacity. The truth of this obſervation is particularly obvious, when he deſcends to his contemporaries, for whom he appears to have little more brotherly kindneſs, than they might have expected at Conſtantinople. The preſent writer is under no apprehenſion of being charged with an unjuſtifiable partiality in this opinion of him, by thoſe who know his diſpoſition and the habits of his life. All that is great and genuinely good in Johnſon, have had no warmer encomiaſt. He has uniformly praiſed his genius, his learn-

ing, his good ſenſe, the ſtrength of his reaſonings, the ſagacity of his critical deciſions, the happineſs of his illuſtrations, and the animation and energy of his ſtyle: He has acknowledged that there is no ſatiety in the delight he inſpires on moral and religious themes; and he makes no ſcruple to declare, that, though there are many opinions erroneous, and many obſervations improper, a great part of his *Lives of the Poets* is ſuch as no one but himſelf could have executed, and in which he will not be followed with ſucceſs.

As a *moraliſt*, his periodical papers are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of other writers, who have derived celebrity from ſimilar publications. He has neither the wit nor the graceful eaſe of Addiſon; nor does he ſhine with the humour and claſſic ſuavity of Goldſmith. His powers are of a more grave, energic, and dignified kind, than any of his competitors; and if he enter-

tains us leſs, he inſtructs us more. He ſhows himſelf maſter of all the receſſes of the human mind, able to detect vice, when diſguiſed in her moſt ſpecious form, and equally poſſeſſed of a corroſive to eradicate, or a lenitive to aſſuage the follies and ſorrows of the heart. Virtuous in his object, juſt in his conceptions, ſtrong in his arguments, and powerful in his exhortations, he arreſts the attention of levity by the luxuriance of his imagery, and grandiloquence of his diction; while he awes detected guilt into ſubmiſſion by the majeſty of his declamation, and the ſterling weight of his opinions. But his genius is only formed to chaſtiſe graver faults, which require to be touched with an heavier hand. He could not chaſe away ſuch lighter foibles as buzz in our ears in ſociety, and fret the feelings of our leſs important hours. His gigantic powers were able to prepare the immortal path to hea-

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ven, but could not ſtoop to decorate our manners with theſe leſſer graces, which make life amiable. Johnſon, at ſuch a taſk, was Hercules at the diſtaff, a lion courſing of a mouſe, or an eagle ſtooping at a fly. He was formed to ſuſtain the character of a majeſtic teacher of moral and religious wiſdom. His *Rambler* furniſhes ſuch an aſſemblage of diſcourſes on practical religion and moral duty, of critical inveſtigations, and allegorical and oriental tales, that no mind can be thought very deficient, that has by conſtant ſtudy and meditation aſſimilated to itſelf all that may be found there. Though inſtruction be its predominant purpoſe, yet it is enlivened with a conſiderable portion of amuſement. Nos. 19, 44, 82, 88, 179, 182, 194, 195, 197, and 198, may be appealed to for inſtances of fertility of fancy, and accurate deſcription of real life. Every page of the *Rambler* ſhows a mind teem-

ing with claſſical alluſion and poetical imagery: illuſtrations from other writers, are upon all occaſions ſo ready, and mingle ſo eaſily in his periods, that the whole appears of one uniform vivid texture. The ſerious papers in his *Idler*, though inferior to thoſe in the Rambler, in ſublimity and ſplendor, are diſtinguiſhed by the ſame dignified morality and ſolemn philoſophy, and lead to the ſame great end of diffuſing wiſdom, virtue, and happineſs. The humourous papers are light and lively, and more in the manner of Addiſon.

As a *noveliſt*, the amazing powers of his imagination, and his unbounded knowledge of men and manners, may be plainly traced in the *oriental tales* in the *Rambler*, in which he has not only ſupported to the utmoſt, the ſublimity of the eaſtern manner of expreſſion, but even greatly excelled any of the oriental writers, in the fertility of his invention, the conduct of

his plots, and the juſtneſs and ſtrength of his ſentiments. His capital work of that kind is his *Raſſelas*. None of his writings have been ſo extenſively diffuſed over Europe. Such a reception demonſtrates great beauties in the work; and there is no doubt that great beauties do exiſt there. The language enchants us with harmony; the arguments are acute and ingenious; the reflections novel, yet juſt. It aſtoniſhes with the ſublimity of its ſentiments, and at the fertility of its illuſtrations, and delights with the abundance and propriety of its imagery. The fund of thinking which it contains, is ſuch, that almoſt every ſentence of it may furniſh a ſubject of long meditation. But it is not without its faults. It is barren of intereſting incidents, and deſtitute of originality, or diſtinction of characters. There is little difference in the manner of thinking and reaſoning of the philoſopher and the fe-

male, of the prince and the waiting woman. *Nehagah* and *Imlac*, *Raſſelas* and *Pekuah*, are all equally argumentative, abſtracted, eloquent, and obſtinate. Of that dark catalogue of calamities, which are deſcribed as incident to the ſeveral ſituations of life which he contemplates, ſome are not the neceſſary conſequence of the ſituation, but of the temper; and others are not thoſe which are moſt generally or ſeverely felt there. The moral that he ſeeks to inculcate, that there is no ſuch thing as happineſs, is one ungrateful to the human heart. If he could ſucceed in eſtabliſhing it, it would cripple every incitement to virtue, and palſy every ſtimulus to action. It would leave man contented to be drifted down the ſtream of life, without an object or an end; to loſe attainable excellence for the want of exertion, and ſink under ſurmountable difficulties, without a ſtruggle. Though there

may not be permanent happineſs in the gratification of our wiſhes, there is much in our expectations that they will be gratified. Hope is the ſweet and innocent ſolace of our frail natures. It is the ſtaff of the unhappy, and however feeble its ſupport, it is immoral and unkind to wreſt it from our hands.

The effect of *Raſſelas*, and of Johnſon's other moral *tales*, is thus beautifully illuſtrated by Mr. Courtenay, in his "Poetical Review;"

> Impreſſive truth, in ſplendid fiction dreſt,
> Checks the vain wiſh, and calms the troubled breaſt;
> O'er the dark mind a light celeſtial throws,
> And ſooths the angry paſſions to repoſe.
> As oil effus'd illumes and ſmooths the deep,
> When round the bark the ſwelling ſurges ſweep.

As a *political writer*, his productions are more diſtinguiſhed by ſubtlety of diſquiſition, poignancy of ſarcaſm, and dignity and energy of ſtyle, than by truth, equity, or candour. He makes much more uſe

of his rhetoric than of his logic, and often gives his reader high-ſounding declamation inſtead of fair argument. In peruſing his repreſentations of thoſe who differed from him on political ſubjects, we are ſometimes inclined to aſſent to a propoſition of his own, that "there is no credit due to a rhetorician's account, either of good or evil." Many poſitions are laid down in admirable language, and in highly-poliſhed periods, which are inconſiſtent with the principles of the Britiſh conſtitution, and repugnant to the common rights of mankind. It muſt always be regretted, that a man of Johnſon's intellectual powers, ſhould have had ſo ſtrong a propenſity to defend arbitrary principles of government. But, on this ſubject, the ſtrength of his language was not more manifeſt, than the weakneſs of his arguments. In apology for him, it may be admitted, that he was a Tory from prin-

ciple, and that moſt of what he wrote, was conformable to his real ſentiments. But to defend all that was written by him, his warmeſt friends will find impoſſible.

In his poſthumous writings, there is little that can be ſaid to be intereſting to ſcience or criticiſm. His *Letters* are valuable, as we find in them the picture, which, without intending it, he has left of himſelf, to be that of a man, who, to great intellectual powers, added extraordinary piety, and many excellent moral qualities. Of letter writing, he gives his idea in the following paſſage: "Some, when they write to their friends, are all affection; ſome are wiſe and ſententious; ſome ſtrain their powers for effects of gravity; ſome write news; and ſome write ſecrets; but to make a letter without affection, without wiſdom, without gravity, without news, and without ſecrets, is doubtleſs the great epiſtolic ſtyle. There is a pleaſure

in correſponding with a friend, where doubt and miſtruſt have no place, and every thing is ſaid as it is thought. Theſe are the letters by which ſouls are united, and by which minds, naturally in uniſon, move each other, as they are moved themſelves. Let me know where you are, how you got thither, how you live there? and every thing that one friend loves to know of another." Such is the account of his *Letters*. The value of them is, that we have the man before us for near twenty years. We ſee him in his undreſs, that is, the undreſs of his mind, which, unlike that of his body, was never ſlovenly. We ſee him in health and in ſickneſs, and in all the petty buſineſs of life. From himſelf, and in his own words, we are enabled to collect the trueſt and beſt information. He writes always in his own ſtyle. His words are now and then too pompous for familiar letters; but his ſkill in letter writ-

ing comes out fully in this collection, and entitles him to rank with the beſt epiſtolary writers of our nation. His letters on the death of Mrs. Saluſbury (mother of Mrs. Piozzi), and Mr. Thrale's eldeſt ſon, are at once moral and pathetic. They flow from a man, who loved them, and the ſurviving family. His ſolicitude for Mr. Thrale, during a long illneſs, and his feelings at his death, do honour to the memory of Mr. Thrale, and to Johnſon's gratitude and ſenſibility. "I am afraid," he ſays, "of thinking what I have loſt: I never had ſuch a friend before." To Mrs. Thrale, he ſays, "To ſee and hear you, is always to hear wit and ſee virtue." He ſeems at times to think her regard for him is abated; and a letter of kindneſs from her appears to have revived and comforted him. After lamenting the loſs of Williams and Levett, he ſays: "Such ſociety I had with them, and ſuch I had

——where I am never likely to have it more." When I came to " love and honour," in your letter, I ſaid to myſelf, " How lov'd, how honour'd once, avails me not." Shall we never again exchange our thoughts by the fireſide ?" After ſeeing him ſtruggle with illneſs and morbid melancholy, it is comfortable to hear him ſay, almoſt at the cloſe of life " Attention and reſpect give pleaſure, however late, and however uſeleſs. But they are not uſeleſs, even when they are late ; it is reaſonable to rejoice as the day declines, to find that it has been ſpent with the approbation of mankind."

His *Prayers and Meditations*, publiſhed by Mr. Strahan, " at his own requeſt," have occaſioned much concern, diſquietude, and offence in the minds of many, who apprehend that the cauſe in which he ſtood forth, will ſuffer by the infirmities of the advocate being expoſed in this publi-

cation, to the prying and malignant eye of the world. It is not merely the name of Johnſon that is to do ſervice to any cauſe. His admirable arguments in favour of religion and morality, are not weakened by the proofs of his practical errors. Theſe are always preciſely what they were, once good, and always good. His arguments in favour of ſelf-denial do not loſe their force *becauſe he faſted*, nor thoſe in favour of devotion, *becauſe he ſaid his prayers*. His faſting and his prayers add ſtrength to his pious reaſonings, from the proof they afford, that he believed in the religion he inculcated. Human nature is frail; common frailties muſt inevitably preclude perfection to the leaſt faulty profeſſor of Chriſtianity. The world never ſuppoſed Johnſon to have been a perfect character. His ſtupendous abilities, and great learning, it is well known, could not preſerve their poſſeſſor from the depreda-

tions of melancholy. But his failings leaned to the ſide of virtue. His ſuperſtition ſeems to have ariſen from the moſt amiable diſpoſition in the world, " a pious awe, and fear to have offended," a wiſh rather to do too much than too little. Such a diſpoſition one loves, and always wiſhes to find in a friend; and it cannot be diſagreeable in the ſight of him who made us. It argues a ſenſibility of heart, a tenderneſs of conſcience, and the fear of God. That he ſhould not be conſcious of the abilities with which Providence had bleſſed him, was impoſſible. He felt his own powers; he felt what he was capable of having performed, and he ſaw how little, comparatively ſpeaking, he had performed. Hence his apprehenſions on the near proſpect of the account to be made, viewed through the medium of conſtitutional and morbid melancholy, which often excluded from his ſight the bright

beams of divine mercy. His ſelf-abaſement was ſtrictly ingenuous; but his expreſſions, when compared with the tenor of his conduct, ſeem too diſparaging. Chriſtianity does not require us to deny any one quality we poſſeſs, or to repreſent ourſelves, in defiance of truth, as one maſs of deformity and guilt. The inſtruction of St. Paul, enforced by the moſt ſacred example, is ſingly this, that we "think not of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think; but that we think ſoberly." Johnſon walked at all times humbly with his God; but when we follow him through all his weakneſſes, his religious horrors, and ſacred punctilios, we are inclined to pity the conſtitutional feebleneſs of his nature, while we admire the perſeverance and fervour of his devotion. We owe to the excellencies of the Supreme Being, every poſſible degree of veneration and honour; but that virtue ſhould tremble in

the preſence of Infinite Goodneſs, is not leſs contrary to reaſon, than it is contrary to heroiſm. In the preſence of Infinite Goodneſs it feels a congeniality, and aſſumes a confidence, that leaps, as it were, the gulf between, and dares to aſpire to ſentiments of attachment, fidelity and love. But it would be unfair to conclude from this circumſtance, that the piety and humility of Johnſon were of no value; and the ſincerity of his repentance, the ſtedfaſtneſs of his faith, and the fervour of his charity, of no uſe. There is ſomething ſo great and awful in the idea of a God, and ſomething ſo faſcinating in the effuſions of gratitude, that there are numbers of men intrepid and heroical, in every other regard, that cannot boaſt of all the ſerenity and aſſurance in the buſineſs of religion, that are ſo earneſtly to be deſired; and yet the piety of theſe men is edifying and venerable. Indeed the fate of " the un-

profitable ſervant" may juſtly beget apprehenſions in the ſtouteſt mind. Language affords no finer expreſſions than thoſe in which the *Prayers* of Johnſon are conceived. They are ſhort, ſimple, and unadorned. They bear ſome reſemblance to the Collects in the "Common Prayer-Book," without that dignity which is derived to the latter, from the venerable antiquity of the ſtyle and expreſſion. They have no particular method, no diſplay of genius, and no beauties that ſhould characterize the man under whoſe name they appear. They have nothing that might not have been produced by any man of plain common ſenſe. At the ſame time they contain few traces of weakneſs or abſurdity. Never did there exiſt a greater diſparity between the performances of the ſame author, than between this publication and the *Lives of the Poets*, or the numbers of the *Rambler*. His *Meditations*, as they are im-

properly called, are merely minutes; at one time of reſolutions for his future conduct, and at another, in the ſtyle of a diary or journal. Neither of them deſerve the commendation which has been beſtowed upon the *Prayers*. They are full of frivolous minuteneſſes, and feminine weakneſs, beyond any thing of which an abſtract deſcription can ſuggeſt the idea. They tell us, that Johnſon, in ſpite of all the contemptuous ridicule with which he has treated that delicate frame, which depends for its compoſure on the clouds and the winds, was himſelf not exempt from languor, ſluggiſhneſs, and procraſtination; that he was full of the moſt pitiable religious credulity; and that his attention was often engroſſed by things in the laſt degree frivolous, futile, and unimportant. But if theſe obſervations are rather diſadvantageous to Johnſon, it is no leſs unqueſtionable that he diſplays a ſenſibility and a

humane benovolence of heart, that have rarely been equalled. Mr. Strahan's apology for Johnſon's *ſeeming* to pray for his deceaſed wife, is ſupported by his opinion, reſpecting purgatory, recorded by Mr. Boſwell. In his cooler moments he did not think ſuch prayers proper, except with the limitations there expreſſed; but his morbid melancholy did not always allow him to be cool; there were many moments when his language countenanced a very different opinion. The ſtruggle in a breaſt, conſtituted as his was, between the ſevere principles of Proteſtantiſm, and the genuine undiſciplinable feelings of the heart, illuſtrates the kindneſs of his nature more than it could be illuſtrated by any other circumſtance.

His *Sermons*, publiſhed under the name of *Dr. Taylor*, are not unworthy of the author of the *Rambler*, and afford additional proof of his ardour in the cauſe of

piety, and every moral duty. The laſt diſcourſe in the collection was intended to be delivered by Dr. Taylor, at the funeral of Johnſon's wife, but he declined the office, becauſe, as he told Mr. Hayes, the praiſe of the deceaſed was too much amplified. He who reads the diſcourſe, will find it a beautiful moral leſſon, written with temper, and no where overcharged with ambitious ornaments. The reſt of the diſcourſes were the fund which Dr. Taylor, from time to time, carried with him to the pulpit.

The *ſtyle* of his proſe writings has been too often criticiſed, to need being noticed here. It has been cenſured, applauded, and imitated, to extremes equally dangerous to the purity of the Engliſh tongue. That he has innovated upon our language by his adoption of Latin derivatives and his preference of abſtract to concrete terms, cannot be denied. But the danger from

his innovation would be trifling, if thoſe alone would copy him who can think with equal preciſion; for few paſſages can be pointed out from his works, in which his meaning could be as accurately expreſſed by ſuch words as are in more familiar uſe. His comprehenſion of mind was the mould for his language. Had his comprehenſion been narrower, his expreſſion would have been eaſier. His ſentences have a dignified march, ſuitable to the elevation of his ſentiments, and the pomp of his ſonorous phraſeology. And it is to be remembered, that while he has added harmony and dignity to our language, he has neither vitiated it by the inſertion of foreign idioms, or the affectation of anomaly in the conſtruction of his ſentences. While the flowers of poetic imagination luxuriantly adorn his ſtyle, it is never enfeebled by their plentitude. It is cloſe without obtenebration, perſpicuous without languor, and ſtrong without im-

petuoſity. No periods are ſo harmonious; none ſo nervous. He has laboured his ſtyle with the greateſt attention; perhaps its elaborateneſs is too apparent. It has, perhaps, too unwieldy and too uniform a dignity. He ſeems to have been particularly ſtudious of the glitter of an antitheſis between the epithet and the ſubſtantive. This ſtrikes while it is new; but to the more experienced reader, though it may ſeem ſometimes forcible, yet it will often prove tireſome. It is remarkable that Johnſon's early performances bear few marks of the ſtyle which he adopted in his *Rambler*. In his *Life of Savage*, the ſtyle is elegant, but not oſtentatious. His ſentences are naturally arranged, and muſical without artifice. He affects not the meaſuring of clauſes, and the balancing of periods. He aims not at ſplendid, glowing diction. He ſeeks not pointed phraſes, and elaborate contraſts. It is al-

ſo worthy of remark, on this ſubject, that Johnſon has altered, and perhaps improved his ſtyle, long after his reputation had been eſtabliſhed, and his *Rambler* had appeared. The compoſition of this work differs a good deal from that of *Raſſelas*, the *Journey to the Weſtern Iſlands*, and *The Lives of the Poets*. The native vigour, and peculiarity of feature, are indeed preſerved, but they are poliſhed to greater elegance, and taught to wear the appearance of a happier eaſe. In the *Rambler* his periods are longer, and his meaning more condenſed; he is more fond of abſtract terms, and ambitious of ſeſquipedalian words. But this work was written while he was occupied in collecting authorities for his *Dictionary*; at a time when Browne and Hooker, Bacon and Hakewell, were continually before him; men whom it was difficult to read, and remain free from the temptation to imitate. In his latter productions, particularly his *Lives of the Poets*,

his ſentences are ſhorter, their conſtruction more ſimple, and the uſe of Latin derivations leſs frequent. He has made his ſtyle in a greater degree elegant without conſtraint, dignified without ambitious ornament, ſtrong without rigidity, and harmonious without elaboration. He has adopted a meaſured pauſe, and a correſpondent length in the numbers of his periods, which gives to his proſe much of the harmony, and ſometimes ſomewhat of the monotony of verſe. As Homer gave a peculiar language to his gods, to expreſs their divine conceptions, let us allow to Johnſon, and to men like him, a ſtyle ſuch as he has uſed; for we have as yet found none more grand and energetic. It is certain that his example has given a general elevation to the language of his country; for many of our beſt writers have approached very near to him; and from the influence which he has had upon our com-

poſition, ſcarcely any thing is written now, that is not better expreſſed than was uſual before he appeared to lead the national taſte. This circumſtance is well deſcribed by Mr. Courtenay, in his "Poetical Review;" a performance which ſhows that he has caught no mean degree of the expanſion and harmony which characterize the ſtyle of Johnſon.

> By nature's gifts ordain'd mankind to rule,
> He like a Titian form'd his brilliant ſchool,
> And taught congenial ſpirits to excel,
> While from his lips impreſſive wiſdom fell.

Among the congenial ſpirits "who formed the ſchool of Johnſon," Mr. Courtenay celebrates the reſpectable names of Goldſmith, Sir Joſhua Reynolds, Dr. Burney, Mr. Malone, Mr. Steevens, Dr. Hawkeſworth, Sir William Jones, and Mr. Boſwell, and concludes his deſcription in the following animated lines:

Nor was his energy confin'd alone
To friends around his philoſophic throne;
His influence wide improv'd our letter'd iſle,
And lucid vigour mark'd the general ſtyle;
As Nile's proud waves, ſwoln from their oozy bed,
Firſt o'er the neighb'ring mead majeſtic ſpread,
Till, gathering force, they more and more expand,
And with due virtue fertilize the land.

Among the imitators of Johnſon's ſtyle, whether intentionally, or by the imperceptible effect of its ſtrength and animation, may be reckoned a great proportion of the moſt diſtinguiſhed writers in our language ſince he appeared, Dr. Robertſon, Dr. Blair, Mr. Gibbon, Dr. Leland, Dr. Ferguſon, Dr. Knox, Dr. Stuart, Dr. Parr, Dr. Thomſon, Dr. Gillies, Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. Chalmers, &c. Perhaps the moſt perfect imitation of Johnſon is a profeſſed one, intituled "A Criticiſm on Gray's Elegy in a Country Church-Yard," ſaid to be written by Dr. Young, Profeſſor of Greek at Glaſgow. It has not only the

peculiarities of Johnſon's ſtyle, but that very ſpecies of literary diſcuſſion and illuſtration for which he was eminent.—But let men of moderate conceptions beware of ill judged imitations. Their attempt to copy his language is Salmoneus thundering at Elis, or a mortal wielding the ſpear of Pelides. It is to raiſe a melancholy contraſt between the ſlimneſs of the thought, and the capacity of the expreſſion, to cover the head of a pigmy with the caſque of a giant.

As a *poet*, the merit of Johnſon, though conſiderable, yet falls far ſhort of that which he has diſplayed in thoſe provinces of literature in which we have already ſurveyed him. As far as ſtrength of expreſſion, fruitfulneſs of invention, and abundance of imagery, conſtitute poetry, he is much more of a poet in his proſe works, than in his metrical compoſitions. Metaphor, to the merit of which he was blind and uncharitable, is ſo much the ſoul and

eſſence of poetry, that without it rhyme and metre are vain. There may be ſmoothneſs, ſyllabic arrangement, and good ſenſe, in a metrical production; but there can be no true poetry without imagery, warm expreſſion, and an enthuſiaſm which intoxicates the reader, lifts him above the ground, and makes him forget that he is mortal. Poetry is paſſion; paſſion is a temporary phrenzy, during which we both hear and ſee what we are totally inſenſible to in our ſober ſenſes. What did the ancients mean by the Pythian prieſteſs being *numine afflata*, when ſhe received inſpiration, and delivered it in verſe, and in applying the ſame idea to poets, but that they had ſuch a temporary delirium? Ratiocination prevailed in Johnſon much more than ſenſibility. He has no daring ſublimities, nor gentle graces; he never glows with the enthuſiaſm of the god, or kindles a ſympathetic emotion in the boſom of his

readers. His poems are the plain and ſenſible effuſions of a mind never hurried beyond itſelf, to which the uſe of rhyme adds no beauty, and from which the uſe of proſe would detract no force. His verſification is ſmooth, flowing, and unreſtrained; but his pauſes are not ſufficiently varied, to reſcue him from the imputation of monotony. He ſeems never at a loſs for rhyme, or deſtitute of a proper expreſſion; and the manner of his verſe appears admirably adapted to didactic or ſatiric poetry, for which his powers were equally, and perhaps alone qualified.

His tragedy of *Irene* may be conſidered as the greateſt effort of his genius. It is a legitimate dramatic compoſition. The unities of time, place, and action, are ſtrictly obſerved. The diction is nervous, rich, and elegant; but ſplendid language, and melodious numbers, will make a fine poem, not a tragedy. The ſubſtance of the ſtory

is ſhortly this. In 1453, Mahomet the Great, firſt emperor of the Turks, laid ſiege to Conſtantinople, and having reduced the place, became enamoured of a fair Greek, whoſe name was *Irene*. The ſultan invited her to embrace the law of Mahomet, and to grace his throne. Enraged at this intended marriage, the janizaries formed a conſpiracy to dethrone the emperor. To avert the impending danger, Mahomet, in a full aſſembly of the grandees, " catching with one hand," as Knolles expreſſes it, " the fair Greek by the hair of her head, and drawing his faulchion with the other, he, at one blow, ſtruck off her head, to the great terror of them all; and having ſo done, ſaid unto them, " Now, by this, judge whether your emperor is able to bridle his affections or not." The ſtory is ſimple, and it remained for Johnſon to amplify it with proper epiſodes, and give it complication and variety. But he has altered the cha-

racter and cataſtrophe, which he found in the hiſtorian, ſo as to diminiſh the dramatic effect. Many faults may be found with the conduct of the fable. The principal one is, that the plot is double, and has the moſt ſtriking faults of ſuch a fable; for it divides the ſpectator's attention and regard between characters, whoſe intereſts are oppoſite, and whoſe happineſs or miſery is made to depend upon the ſame events. We cannot hope the eſcape of *Demetrius* and *Aſpaſia*, without dreading the condemnation of *Irene*; and our wiſhes as to each, operating in contradiction, muſt diminiſh our concern for both. The cataſtrophe, which is made to depend upon the fate of *Irene*, is meanly worked up. It is brought about too ſuddenly, without a due connection with preparatory incidents, and at the very moment when we have not leiſure to contemplate it, and are alone intereſted for the eſcape of *Demetrius* and *Aſ-*

paſia. We neither anticipate it with ſufficient perſpicuity, nor conſider it with ſolemnity, ſo as to be affected, upon its occurrence, with genuine dramatic grief or terror. The characters of the piece have nothing diſcriminative. They are not repreſentations of different tempers, paſſions, and minds, but of different degrees of virtue and vice. They are ſo naked of peculiarity, that we cannot know why the ſame incidents ſhould operate differently upon any one of them, ſo as to impel them to a different action, or produce an emotion even varying in ſtrength from what it would have done in any other. They poſſeſs too much of a balanced importance in the conduct of the drama, ſo that the mind knows not how to make its election of a principal character, or to fix its attention upon any perſonage to whoſe felicity it may attach its wiſhes, and upon whoſe fate it may ſuſpend its ſympathy. From the

name of the tragedy, we muſt ſuppoſe that Johnſon conſidered *Irene* as the *heroine*, yet the reader feels more concern, even for the ſtoic virtue and cool fondneſs of *Aſpaſia*. The former is too much of a mixed character; neither her goodneſs, nor her weakneſs, nor her depravity are predominant. She has not ſufficient virtue to awaken our ſympathy for the ſufferings of innocence, nor ſufficient vice to arouſe our terror at the puniſhment of guilt. The ſpeeches are oftener the recollections of paſt feelings, than the ebullitions of immediate paſſions, ſtarted by the paſſing actions of the ſcene. Little is made preſent to the ſpectator's mind, and of that little, nothing has life. His critique upon the tragic poets, of the commencement of this century, is, perhaps, in no inſtance, more true than it is of himſelf.

From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
And declamation roar'd whilſt paſſion ſlept;

Yet ſtill did virtue deign the ſtage to tread,
Philoſophy remain'd, though nature fled.

He has nothing of the fire of Lee, or the pathos of Otway. He is more declamatory than Rowe, and *Irene*, if poſſible, is colder than " Cato." There is not, throughout the play, a ſingle ſituation to excite curioſity, and raiſe a conflict of paſſions. The ſentiments are juſt and always moral, but ſeldom appropriated to the character, and generally too philoſophic. His poetical imagery is neither ſtriking nor abundant. The language in which the thoughts are conveyed, is, in general, vigorous, accurately poliſhed, and regularly muſical. It would be difficult to ſelect a paſſage in dramatic poetry more nobly conceived, or finely expreſſed, than the reply of *Demetrius* to the complaint of his friend, that no prodigy from Heaven had foretold the calamities of Greece.

A thouſand horrid prodigies foretold it;
A feeble government, eluded laws,
A factious populace, luxurious nobles,
And all the maladies of ſinking ſtates.
When public villany, too ſtrong for juſtice,
Shows his bold front, the harbinger of ruin,
Can brave Leontius call for any wonders,
Which cheats interpret, and which fools regard?
When ſome neglected fabric nods beneath
The weight of years, and totters to the tempeſt,
Muſt Heaven diſpatch the meſſengers of light,
Or wake the dead to warn us of its fall?

As an alloy to the beauties of this paſſage, impartial criticiſm is compelled to turn to another, which is ſurely little ſhort of nonſenſe, and well worthy of a place in the treatiſe of "Scriblerus."

Oft have I rag'd, when their wide-waſting cannon
Lay pointed at our batteries, *yet unform'd*,
And *broke* the *meditated lines* of war.

Irene may be added to ſome other plays in our language, which have loſt their place in the theatre, but continue to pleaſe in the cloſet. As it is the drama of our

great Engliſh moraliſt, the preſent writer ſhould wiſh to ſee it revived.

Of the poetical compoſitions, which are known to be of his writing, the *Imitations of Juvenal* are the beſt; and are, perhaps, the nobleſt imitations to be found in any language. They are not ſo cloſe as thoſe done by Pope from Horace, but they are infinitely more ſpirited and energetic. In Pope, the moſt peculiar images of Roman life are adapted with ſingular addreſs to our own times; in Johnſon, the ſimilitude is only in general paſſages, ſuitable to every age in which refinement has degenerated into depravity.

His *London* breathes the true vehement contemptuous indignation of Juvenal's ſatire. It is more popular in its ſubject, and more animated in its compoſition, than his *Vanity of Human Wiſhes*. It blazes forth with the genuine fire of poetry, in the livelineſs of its correſpondent alluſions, the

energy of its expreſſions, and the frequency of its apoſtrophes. The *Vanity of Human Wiſhes* is more grave, moral, ſententious, and ſtately. In his *London* he often takes nothing more than the ſubject from the Roman poet, proves or illuſtrates it according to the originality of his own conceptions, or the warmth of his own fancy; and ſometimes, too, he deſerts him altogether, and that not only where the modeſty of an Engliſh ear, and the inapplicability of the original to modern cuſtoms require it, but in places where the topics and the moral uſe is as applicable to London as they are to ancient Rome. Thus he has either totally neglected, or but ſlightly imitated that beautiful paſſage beginning at ver. 137.

> Dat teſtem Romæ tam ſanctum, quam fuit hoſpes
> Nummis ſdæi, &c.

and ending with ver. 190.

——præſtare tributa clientes
Cogimur, et cultis augere peculia ſervis.

The *Vanity of Human Wiſhes* follows the original more cloſely, but ſtill with many omiſſions. The ſubject is taken from the ſecond "Alcibiades" of Plato, and has an intermixture of the ſentiments of Socrates, concerning the object of prayers offered up to the Deity. The general propoſition is, that good and evil are ſo little underſtood by mankind, that their wiſhes, when granted, are always deſtructive. This is exemplified in a variety of inſtances; ſuch as riches, ſtate-preferment, eloquence, military glory, long life, and the advantages of beauty. Juvenal's concluſion is admirable. "Let us," he ſays, "leave it to the gods to judge what is fitteſt for us. Man is dearer to his Creator than to himſelf. If we muſt pray for any ſpecial grace, let it be for a ſound mind, in a ſound body. Let us pray for fortitude,

that we may think the labours of Hercules, and all his ſufferings, preferable to a life of luxury, diſſipation, and the ſoft repoſe of Sardanapulus. This is a bleſſing within the reach of every man; this we can give ourſelves. It is virtue, and virtue only, that can make us happy." For the characters which Juvenal has choſen to illuſtrate his doctrine, Johnſon has ſubſtituted others from modern hiſtory; for Sejanus, he gives Cardinal *Wolſey*, *Buckingham*, ſtabbed by Felton, *Strafford* and *Clarendon*; for Demoſthenes and Cicero, *Lydiat*, *Galileo*, and *Laud*; for Hannibal, *Charles XII*; and to ſhow the conſequences of long life, he ſays,

> From *Marlb'rough's* eyes the ſtreams of dotage flow,
> And *Swift* expires a driveller and a ſhow:

And of beauty he ſays,

> Yet *Vane* would tell what ills from beauty ſpring,
> And *Sedley* curs'd the form that pleas'd a king.

This laſt example is ill choſen; for it is well known that the Counteſs of Dorcheſter, miſtreſs to James II. was not handſome. Owing to the dearth of modern examples, his inſtances are leſs numerous and leſs ſtriking than thoſe of Juvenal. His thoughts are not ſo compreſſed in the expreſſion, or ſo energetically conveyed to the mind, as thoſe of the Roman ſatiriſt; but his diction is leſs laboured and affected, and he flows in a ſtream of verſification ſcarcely leſs rapid and eloquent, but infinitely more ſmooth than the Latin poet. He has preſerved all the beauties and virtue of the original moral, but ſtripped it, with infinite art, from all appearance of Epicurean infidelity, and filled it with precepts worthy of a philoſopher, and wiſhes fitting for a Chriſtian. He has ſucceeded wonderfully in giving to his imitation the air of an original. The Chriſtian had to ſtruggle with the Heathen

poet, and though we cannot ſay that he has ſurpaſſed him, he has, at leaſt, entered into a noble competition.

Of his ſmaller poems, the *Prologue for the Opening of Drury-Lane Theatre*, has been univerſally admired, as a maſterly and comprehenſive criticiſm upon the ſeveral ages of Engliſh dramatic poetry. The ſubject and the moral were well conceived, and are as nobly expreſſed. The character of *Shakſpeare* is delineated with a felicity of expreſſion, that challenges the whole compaſs of Engliſh poetry. His other *Prologues* are copies of his mind, clear and comprehenſive, pointed and energetic. Of his *Odes* upon the ſeaſons, his addreſſes to *Autumn* and *Winter* ſeem the beſt. Many of the ſtanzas are exceedingly beautiful; as uſual, moral, and unuſually pathetic. They manifeſt, however, that his deſcriptive poetry is not the production of a warm fancy, impelled to

give vent by poeſy to its overflowing feelings. Thoſe paſſions and objects which would inſpire the genuine poetic mind with enthuſiaſm, paſs by him unfelt and unnoticed. He is melancholy in Spring, jocund in Winter; he laviſhes no encomiums upon the perfumed zephyrs, but flies to melancholy morals, or commemorates the comforts of a cheering flaggon and a ſnug fire-ſide. His *Ode to Evening*, addreſſed to *Stella*, the *Natural Beauty*, and the *Vanity of Wealth*, are in general elegant. The firſt is warm and ſentimental, and ſhows that he was neither ignorant of the feelings, nor inſenſible to the joys of a lover. The *Ode to Friendſhip* is diſtinguiſhed by delicacy of ſentiment and beauty of expreſſion. Of his addreſs *To Lyce*, the idea perhaps is not original; but the images are happily ſelected, and well expreſſed. *Stella in Mourning*, the verſes to *Lady Firebrace*, *To an elderly Lady*, and *On the Sprig*

of Myrtle, are occaſional compoſitions, and of courſe derive their merit chiefly from local and temporary circumſtances. The principal art in ſuch performances, is to make a trifling circumſtance poetical or witty. In the verſes *On the Sprig of Myrtle*, he has very happily ſucceeded. The *Ant* muſt be allowed to be nervous and elegant. The verſes *On the Death of Stephen Grey*, are worthy the pen of Pope.

The *Elegy on the Death of Mr. Levett*, as it was among the laſt, ſo it is one of the beſt of his performances. It is moral, characteriſtic, and pathetic. The following ſtanzas are exquiſitely beautiful.

Yet ſtill he fills affection's eye,
  Obſcurely wiſe and coarſely kind;
Nor letter'd arrogance deny
  This praiſe to merit unrefin'd.
When fainting nature call'd for aid,
  And hovering death prepar'd the blow,
His vigorous remedy diſplay'd
  The power of art without the ſhow:

In miſery's darkeſt cavern known,
His uſeful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeleſs anguiſh pour'd his groan,
And lonely want retir'd to die.
No ſummons mock'd by chill delay,
No petty gain diſdain'd by pride;
The modeſt wants of every day
The toil of every day ſupply'd.

The concluding lines are exceptionable:

Death broke at once the *vital chain*,
And forc'd his ſoul the *neareſt way*.

Since it is the ſoul which gives *life*, the chain that confines the ſoul is coporeal: The *vital* chain cannot be ſaid, with propriety, to be broken by death. Johnſon would not have forgiven an error of this kind in Gray.

Of his remaining pieces, ſome are mere impromptus, which were never intended for the public eye, and others were the ſuggeſtions of temporary incidents. Many of them are ſprightly and elegant, and may be read with pleaſure; but they require

no diſtinct enumeration, or particular criticiſm.

Among our Engliſh poets, it is no unpleaſant reflection to be able to find ſo many elegant writers of Latin verſe; in the firſt rank of which, Johnſon ſtands very high. Jonſon, Craſhaw, Cowley, May, Milton, Marvel, Addiſon, Gray, Smart, Warton, and Johnſon, are ſuch writers of Latin verſe, as any country might with juſtice be proud to own. Johnſon was eminently ſkilled in the Latin tongue, and ſtrongly attached to the cultivation of Latin poetry. The firſt fruits of his genius were compoſitions in Latin verſe. His tranſlation of the *Meſſiah*, gained him reputation in the college in which it was written, and was approved by Pope. Virgil ſeems to have been his model for language and verſification. He has copied the varied pauſes of his verſe, the length of his periods, the peculiar grace of his

expreſſions, and his majeſtic dignity, with conſiderable ſucceſs. But his compoſition is ſometimes unclaſſical and incorrect. The moſt exceptionable line is the firſt; *tollere concentum*, if allowable, is ſurely an awkward phraſe for "begin the ſong." His *Odes*, particularly, the *Ode Inchkenneth*, *Ode in the Iſle of Sky*, and that *to Mrs. Thrale*, from the ſame place, are eaſy, elegant, and poetical. They unite claſſical language, tender ſentiment, and harmonious verſe. His poem, Γνῶθι σεαυτον, is nervous and energetic. His *Epitaphs* are diſtinguiſhed by claſſical elegance and nervous ſimplicity. Thoſe on *Goldſmith* and *Thrale* ſeem the beſt. His *Epigrams* are, in general, neat and pointed. In the *Anthologia*, we admire ſometimes a happy imitation, and ſometimes regret inelegant expreſſions.

For obvious reaſons, his Latin pieces, though excellent in their kind, can never

acquire the popularity of the Engliſh. Thoſe who read with pleaſure the Latin claſſics, ſee their inferiority; to others, they are unintereſting and unintelligible. "The delight which they afford;" to uſe his own words, in criticiſing the Latin poetry of Milton, "is rather by the exquiſite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of ſentiment." This character will generally ſuit our modern Latin poetry; for if we except that noble ode of Gray's, written at the Grande Chartreuſe, and ſome few others, there are not many of the *Poemata Anglorum*, that contain much "power of invention, or vigour of ſentiment."

Upon the whole, the various productions of Johnſon ſhow a life ſpent in ſtudy and meditation. It may be fairly allowed, as he uſed to ſay of himſelf, that *he has writ-*

ten his ſhare. His oddities and infirmities in common life, will, after a while, be overlooked and forgotten; but his writings will remain a monument of his genius and learning; ſtill more and more ſtudied and admired, while Britons ſhall continue to be characterized by a love of elegance and ſublimity, of good ſenſe and virtue. In the works of Johnſon, the reader will find a perpetual ſource of pleaſure and inſtruction. With due precaution, men may learn to give to their ſtyle, elegance, harmony, and preciſion; they may be taught to think with vigour and perſpicuity; and all, by a diligent attention to his writings, may advance in virtue.

The character of Johnſon, as given by Mr. Boſwell in the concluſion of his work, is delineated with a maſterly pencil. The drawing appears to be ſufficiently accurate, the light and ſhade well diſtributed, and the colouring very little overcharged or

heightened; though a favourable likeneſs was perhaps in ſome degree intended, as far as might ſeem conſiſtent with the truth of reſemblance, and no farther.

" His figure was large and well-formed, and his countenance of the caſt of an ancient ſtatue; yet his appearance was rendered ſtrange and ſomewhat uncouth, by convulſive cramps, by the ſcars of that diſtemper which it was once imagined the royal touch could cure, and by a ſlovenly mode of dreſs. He had the uſe only of one eye; yet ſo much does mind govern, and even ſupply the deficiency of organs, that his viſual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament, that he never knew the natural joy of a free and vigorous uſe of his limbs: when he walked, it was like the ſtruggling gait of one in fetters; when he rode, he had

no command or direction of his horſe, but was carried as if in a balloon. That, with his conſtitution and habits of life, he ſhould have lived ſeventy-five years, is a proof that an inherent *vivida vis* is a powerful preſervative of the human frame.

" Man is in general made up of contradictory qualities, and theſe will ever ſhow themſelves in ſtrange ſucceſſion, where a conſiſtency, in appearance at leaſt, if not in reality, has not been attained by long habits of philoſophical diſcipline. In proportion to the native vigour of the mind, the contradictory qualities will be the more prominent, and more difficult to be adjuſted; and therefore we are not to wonder, that Johnſon exhibited an eminent example of this remark which I have made upon human nature. At different times he ſeemed a different man, in ſome reſpects; not, however, in any great or eſſential article, upon which he had fully em-

ployed his mind, and ſettled certain principles of duty, but only in his manners, and in diſplays of argument and fancy in his talk. He was prone to ſuperſtition, but not to credulity. Though his imagination might incline him to a belief of the marvellous and the myſterious, his vigorous reaſon examined the evidence with jealouſy. He was a ſincere and zealous Chriſtian, of high church of England and monarchical principles, which he would not tamely ſuffer to be queſtioned; and had, perhaps, at an early period, narrowed his mind ſomewhat too much, both as to religion and politics. His being impreſſed with the danger of extreme latitude in either, though he was of a very independent ſpirit, occaſioned his appearing ſomewhat unfavourable to the prevalence of that noble freedom of ſentiment which is the beſt poſſeſſion of man. Nor can it be denied, that he had many prejudices; which, however,

frequently ſuggeſted many of his pointed ſayings, that rather ſhow a playfulneſs of fancy, than any ſettled malignity. He was ſteady and inflexible in maintaining the obligations of religion and morality, both from a regard for the order of ſociety, and from a veneration for the Great Source of all order; correct, nay ſtern in his taſte; hard to pleaſe, and eaſily offended; impetuous and irritable in his temper, but of a moſt humane and benevolent heart, which ſhowed itſelf not only in a moſt liberal charity, as far as his circumſtances would allow, but in a thouſand inſtances of active benevolence. He was afflicted with a bodily diſeaſe which made him reſtleſs and fretful, and with a conſtitutional melancholy, the clouds of which darkened the brightneſs of his fancy, and gave a gloomy caſt to his whole courſe of thinking: we therefore ought not to wonder at his ſallies of impatience and paſſion at any time, eſpe-

cially when provoked by obtruſive ignorance, or preſuming petulance; and allowance muſt be made for his uttering haſty and ſatirical ſallies, even againſt his beſt friends. And ſurely, when it is conſidered, that "amidſt ſickneſs and ſorrow," he exerted his faculties in ſo many works for the benefit of mankind, and particularly that he achieved the great and admirable Dictionary of our language, we muſt be aſtoniſhed at his reſolution. The ſolemn text of "him to whom much is given, much will be required," ſeems to have been ever preſent to his mind in a rigorous ſenſe, and to have made him diſſatisfied with his labours and acts of goodneſs, however comparatively great; ſo that the unavoidable conſciouſneſs of his ſuperiority was in that reſpect a cauſe of diſquiet. He ſuffered ſo much from this, and from the gloom which perpetually haunted him, and made ſolitude frightful, that it may be ſaid

of him, "If in this life only he had hope, he was of all men moſt miſerable." He loved praiſe when it was brought to him; but was too proud to ſeek for it. He was ſomewhat ſuſceptible of flattery. As he was general and unconfined in his ſtudies, he cannot be conſidered as maſter of any one particular ſcience; but he had accumulated a vaſt and various collection of learning and knowledge, which was ſo arranged in his mind, as to be ever in readineſs to be brought forth. But his ſuperiority over other learned men conſiſted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of uſing his mind; a certain continual power of ſeizing the uſeful ſubſtance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; ſo that knowledge which we often ſee to be no better than lumber in men of dull underſtanding, was in him true, evident, and actual wiſdom. His moral precepts are

practical; for they are drawn from an intimate acquaintance with human nature. His maxims carry conviction; for they are founded on the baſis of common ſenſe. His mind was ſo full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet; yet it is remarkable, that however rich his proſe is in that reſpect, the poetical pieces which he wrote were in general not ſo, but rather ſtrong ſentiment and acute obſervation, conveyed in good verſe, particularly in heroic couplets. Though uſually grave, and even awful in his deportment, he poſſeſſed uncommon and peculiar powers of wit and humour: he frequently indulged himſelf in colloquial pleaſantry; and the heartieſt merriment was often enjoyed in his company; with this great advantage, that as it was entirely free from any poiſonous tincture of vice or impiety, it was ſalutary to thoſe who ſhared in it. He had accuſtomed himſelf to ſuch accuracy in his com-

mon converſation, that he at all times delivered himſelf with a force, choice, and elegance of expreſſion, the effect of which was aided by his having a loud voice, and a ſlow and deliberate utterance. He united a moſt logical head with a moſt fertile imagination, which gave him an extraordinary advantage in arguing; for he could reaſon cloſe or wide, as he ſaw beſt for the moment. Exulting in his intellectual ſtrength and dexterity, he could, when he pleaſed, be the greateſt ſophiſt that ever contended in the liſts of declamation; and from a ſpirit of contradiction, and a delight in ſhowing his powers, he would often maintain the wrong ſide with equal warmth and ingenuity: ſo that when there was an audience, his real opinions could ſeldom be gathered from his talk; though when he was in company with a ſingle friend, he would diſcuſs a ſubject with genuine fairneſs. But he was too conſcientious to make

error permanent and pernicious, by deliberately writing it; and in all his numerous works, he earneſtly inculcated what appeared to him to be the truth. His piety was conſtant, and was the ruling principle of all his conduct; and the more we conſider his character, we ſhall be the more diſpoſed to regard him with admiration and reverence."

His character, as given by Mrs. Piozzi in her "Anecdotes," is drawn with ſpirit and propriety, though ſomewhat leſs favourably.

"His ſtature was remarkably high, and his limbs exceedingly large: his ſtrength was more than common, I believe, and his activity had been greater, I have heard, than ſuch a form gave one reaſon to expect: his features were ſtrongly marked, and his countenance particularly rugged; though the original complexion had certainly been fair, a circumſtance ſomewhat unuſual, his ſight

was near, and otherwiſe imperfect; yet his eyes, though of a light-gray colour, were ſo wild, ſo piercing, and at times ſo fierce, that fear was, I believe, the firſt emotion in the hearts of all his beholders. His mind was ſo comprehenſive, that no language but that he uſed could have expreſſed its contents; and ſo ponderous was his language, that ſentiments leſs lofty and leſs ſolid than his were, would have been encumbered, not adorned by it.

" Mr. Johnſon was not intentionally, however, a pompous converſer: and though he was accuſed of uſing big words, as they are called, it was only when little ones could not expreſs his meaning as clearly, or when, perhaps, the elevation of the thought would have been diſgraced by a dreſs leſs ſuperb. He uſed to ſay, " that the ſize of a man's underſtanding might always be juſtly meaſured by his mirth;" and his own was never contemptible. He would laugh at a

ſtroke of genuine humour, or ſudden ſally of odd abſurdity, as heartily and freely as I ever yet ſaw any man; and though the jeſt was often ſuch as few felt beſides himſelf, yet his laugh was irreſiſtible, and was obſerved immediately to produce that of the company, not merely from the notion that it was proper to laugh when he did, but purely out of want of power to forbear it. He was no enemy to ſplendour of apparel, or pomp of equipage. "Life," he would ſay, "is barren enough, ſurely, with all her trappings; let us therefore be cautious how we ſtrip her."

"Of Mr. Johnſon's erudition the world has been the judge; and we who produce each a ſcore of his ſayings, as proofs of that wit which in him was inexhauſtible, reſemble travellers, who, having viſited Delhi or Golconda, bring home each a handful of oriental pearl, to evince the riches of the Great Mogul.

" As his purſe was ever open to alms-giving, ſo was his heart tender to thoſe who wanted relief, and his ſoul ſuſceptible of gratitude, and of every kind impreſſion; yet, though he had refined his ſenſibility, he had not endangered his quiet, by encouraging in himſelf a ſolicitude about trifles, which he treated with the contempt they deſerve.

" Mr. Johnſon had a roughneſs in his manner, which ſubdued the ſaucy, and terrified the meek: this was, when I knew him, the prominent part of a character which few durſt venture to approach ſo nearly, and which was for that reaſon in many reſpects groſsly and frequently miſtaken; and it was, perhaps, peculiar to him, that the lofty conſciouſneſs of his own ſuperiority, which animated his looks, and raiſed his voice in converſation, caſt likewiſe an impenetrable veil over him when he ſaid nothing. His talk, therefore, had

commonly the complexion of arrogance, his ſilence of ſuperciliouſneſs. He was, however, ſeldom inclined to be ſilent when any moral or literary queſtion was ſtarted; and it was on ſuch occaſions that, like the ſage in *Raſſelas*, he ſpoke, and attention watched his lips; he reaſoned, and conviction cloſed his periods. If poetry was talked of, his quotations were the readieſt; and had he not been eminent for more ſolid and brilliant qualities, mankind would have united to extol his extraordinary memory. His manner of repeating deſerves to be deſcribed, though, at the ſame time, it defeats all power of deſcription; but whoever once heard him repeat an ode of Horace, would be long before they could endure to hear it repeated by another.

" His equity in giving the character of living acquaintance, ought not, undoubtedly, to be omitted in his own, whence partiality and prejudice were totally excluded,

and truth alone preſided in his tongue; a ſteadineſs of conduct the more to be commended, as no man had ſtronger likings or averſions. His veracity was, indeed, from the moſt trivial to the moſt ſolemn occaſions, ſtrict, even to ſeverity; he ſcorned to embelliſh a ſtory with fictitious circumſtances, which (he uſed to ſay), took off from its real value. "A ſtory," ſays Johnſon, "ſhould be a ſpecimen of life and manners; but if the ſurrounding circumſtances are falſe, as it is no more a repreſentation of reality, it is no longer worthy our attention."

"For the reſt—That beneficence which, during his life, increaſed the comforts of ſo many, may, after his death, be, perhaps, ungratefully forgotten; but that piety which dictated the ſerious papers in the *Rambler*, will be for ever remembered, for ever, I think, revered. That ample repoſitory of religious truth, moral wiſdom, and accu-

rate criticiſm, breathes, indeed, the genuine emanations of its great author's mind, expreſſed, too, in a ſtyle ſo natural to him, and ſo much like his common mode of converſing, that I was myſelf but little aſtoniſhed, when he told me that he had ſcarcely read over one of thoſe inimitable eſſays before they went to the preſs.

"I will add one or two peculiarities more: Though at an immeaſurable diſtance from content in the contemplation of his own uncouth form and figure, he did not like another man much the leſs for being a coxcomb. Though a man of obſcure birth himſelf, his partiality to people of family was viſible on every occaſion; his zeal for ſubordination warm even to bigotry; his hatred to innovation, and reverence for the old feudal times, apparent, whenever any poſſible manner of ſhowing them occurred. I have ſpoken of his piety, his charity, and his truth, the enlargement of

his heart, and the delicacy of his ſentiments; and when I ſearch for ſhadow to my portrait, none can I find but what was formed by pride, differently modified as different occaſions ſhowed it; yet never was pride ſo purified as Johnſon's, at once from meanneſs and from vanity. The mind of this man was, indeed, expanded beyond the common limits of human nature, and ſtored with ſuch variety of knowledge, that I uſed to think it reſembled a royal pleaſure-ground, where every plant, of every name and nation, flouriſhed in the full perfection of their powers, and where, though lofty woods and falling cataracts firſt caught the eye, and fixed the earlieſt attention of beholders, yet neither the trim parterre, nor the pleaſing ſhrubbery, nor even the antiquated evergreens, were denied a place in ſome fit corner of the happy valley."

His character, as given by Dr. Towers, in his "Eſſay," appears to have been writ-

ten under no impreſſions of prepoſſeſſion or prejudice, and exhibits a very commendable degree of candour, impartiality, and preciſion.

" He poſſeſſed extraordinary powers of underſtanding, which were much cultivated by ſtudy, and ſtill more by meditation and reflection. His memory was remarkably retentive, his imagination uncommonly vigorous, and his judgment keen and penetrating. He had a ſtrong ſenſe of the importance of religion; his piety was ſincere, and ſometimes ardent; and his zeal for the intereſts of virtue was often manifeſted in his converſation and in his writings. The ſame energy which was diſplayed in his literary productions, was exhibited alſo in his converſation, which was various, ſtriking, and inſtructive; and, perhaps, no man ever equalled him for nervous and pointed repartees.

" The great originality which ſometimes appeared in his conceptions, and the perſpicuity and force with which he delivered them, greatly enhanced the value of his converſation; and the remarks that he delivered, received additional weight from the ſtrength of his voice, and the ſolemnity of his manner. He was conſcious of his own ſuperiority; and when in company with literary men, or with thoſe with whom there was any poſſibility of rivalſhip or competition, this conſciouſneſs was too apparent. With inferiors, and thoſe who readily admitted all his claims, he was often mild and agreeable; but to others, ſuch was often the arrogance of his manners, that the endurance of it required no ordinary degree of patience. He was very dexterous at argumentation; and when his reaſonings were not ſolid, they were at leaſt artful and plauſible. His retorts were ſo powerful, that his friends and acquaint-

ance were generally cautious of entering the liſts againſt him; and the ready acquieſcence of thoſe with whom he aſſociated, in his opinions and aſſertions, probably rendered him more dogmatic than he might otherwiſe have been. With thoſe, however, with whom he lived, and with whom he was familiar, he was ſometimes cheerful and ſprightly, and ſometimes indulged himſelf in ſallies of wit and pleaſantry. He ſpent much of his time, eſpecially his latter years, in converſation, and ſeems to have had ſuch an averſion to being left without company, as was ſometimes extraordinary in a man poſſeſſed of ſuch intellectual powers, and whoſe underſtanding had been ſo highly cultivated.

" He ſometimes diſcovered much impetuoſity of temper, and was too ready to take offence at others; but when conceſſions were made, he was eaſily appeaſed. For thoſe from whom he had received kind-

neſs in the earlier part of his life, he ſeemed ever to retain a particular regard, and manifeſted much gratitude towards thoſe by whom he had at any time been benefited. He was ſoon offended with pertneſs or ignorance; but he ſometimes ſeemed to be conſcious of having anſwered the queſtions of others with too much roughneſs, and was then deſirous to diſcover more gentleneſs of temper, and to communicate information with more ſuavity of manners. When not under the influence of perſonal pique, of pride, or of religious or political prejudices, he ſeems to have had great ardour of benevolence; and, on ſome occaſions, he gave ſignal proofs of generoſity and humanity.

"He was naturally melancholy, and his views of human life appear to have been habitually gloomy. This appears from his *Raſſelas*, and in many paſſages of his writings. It was alſo a ſtriking part of the cha-

racter of Johnſon, that with powers of mind that did honour to human nature, he had weakneſſes and prejudices that ſeemed ſuited only to the loweſt of the ſpecies. His piety was ſtrongly tinctured with ſuperſtition; and we are aſtoniſhed to find the author of the *Rambler* expreſſing ſerious concern, becauſe he had put milk into his tea on a Good-Friday. His cuſtom of praying for the dead, though unſupported by reaſon or by Scripture, was a leſs irrational ſuperſtition. Indeed, one of the great features of Johnſon's character, was a degree of bigotry, both in politics and in religion, which is now ſeldom to be met with in perſons of a cultivated underſtanding. Few other men could have been found in the preſent age, whoſe political bigotry would have led them to ſtyle the celebrated John Hampden "the zealot of rebellion;" and the religious bigotry of the man, who, when at Edinburgh, would not go to hear

Dr. Robertſon preach, becauſe he would not be preſent at a Preſbyterian aſſembly, is not eaſily to be paralleled in this age and in this country. His habitual incredulity with reſpect to facts, of which there was no reaſonable ground for doubt, as ſtated by Mrs. Piozzi, and which was remarked by Hogarth, was alſo a ſingular trait in his character, and eſpecially when contrary to his ſuperſtitious credulity on other occaſions. To the cloſe of life he was not only occupied in forming ſchemes of religious reformation; but, even to a very late period of it, he ſeems to have been ſolicitous to apply himſelf to ſtudy with renewed diligence and vigour. It is remarkable, that in his ſixty-fourth year, he attempted to learn the low Dutch language; and in his ſixty-ſeventh year he made a reſolution to apply himſelf vigorouſly to ſtudy, particularly the Greek and Italian tongues.

" The faults and the foibles of Johnſon, whatever they were, are now deſcended with him to the grave; but his virtues ſhould be the object of our imitation. His works, with all their defects, are a moſt valuable and important acceſſion to the literature of England. His political writings will probably be little read on any other account, than for the dignity and energy of his ſtyle; but his Dictionary, his Moral Eſſays, and his productions in polite literature, will convey uſeful inſtruction and elegant entertainment, as long as the language in which they are written ſhall be underſtood, and give him a juſt claim to a diſtinguiſhed rank among the beſt and ableſt writers that England has produced."

The eſtimate of his literary character given by Mr. Murphy in his " Eſſay," is, with a very few exceptions, fair, candid, and juſt. He ſometimes admits his errors, and ſometimes endeavours to apologize for

them. His compariſon between Johnſon and Addiſon is excellent; and, though long, is of too much value to be withheld.

" Like Milton and Addiſon, Dr. Johnſon ſeems to have been fond of his Latin poetry. Thoſe compoſitions ſhow that he was an early ſcholar; but his verſes have not the graceful eaſe that gave ſo much ſuavity to the poems of Addiſon. The tranſlation of the Meſſiah labours under two diſadvantages; it is firſt to be compared with Pope's inimitable performance, and afterwards with the Pollio of Virgil. It may appear trifling to remark, that he has made the letter *o*, in the word *Virgo*, long and ſhort in the ſame line; *Virgo, Virgo parit*. But the tranſlation has great merit, and ſome admirable lines. In the *Odes* there is a ſweet flexibility, particularly *To his Worthy Friend Dr. Laurence*, on *Himſelf at the Theatre, March* 8. 1771, the *Ode* in

the Iſle of Sky, and that to *Mrs. Thrale*, from the ſame place.

" His Engliſh poetry is ſuch as leaves room to think, if he had devoted himſelf to the Muſes, that he would have been the rival of Pope. His firſt production in this kind was *London;* a poem, in imitation of the third ſatire of Juvenal. The vices of the metropolis are placed in the room of ancient manners. The author had heated his mind with the ardour of Juvenal; and, having the ſkill to poliſh his numbers, he became a ſharp accuſer of the times. The *Vanity of Human Wiſhes* is an imitation of the tenth ſatire of the ſame author. Though it is tranſlated by Dryden, Johnſon's imitation approaches neareſt to the ſpirit of the original.

" What Johnſon has ſaid of the Tragedy of Cato, may be applied to *Irene:* " It is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama; rather a ſucceſſion of juſt ſentiments in ele-

gant language, than a repreſentation of natural affections. Nothing excites or aſſuages emotion. The events are expected without ſolicitude, and are remembered without joy or ſorrow. Of the agents we have no care; we conſider not what they are doing, nor what they are ſuffering; we wiſh only to know what they have to ſay. It is unaffecting elegance, and chill philoſophy.

" The prologue to *Irene* is written with elegance, and, in a peculiar ſtrain, ſhows the literary pride and lofty ſpirit of the author. The epilogue, we are told in a late publication, was written by Sir William Yonge. This is a new diſcovery, but by no means probable. When the appendages to a dramatic performance are not aſſigned to a friend, or an unknown hand, or a perſon of faſhion, they are always ſuppoſed to be written by the author of the play. It is to be wiſhed, however, that the

epilogue in queſtion could be transferred to any other writer. It is the worſt *Jeu d' Eſprit* that ever fell from Johnſon's pen.

" Of his *Miſcellaneous Tracts* and *Philological Diſſertations*, it will ſuffice to ſay, they are the productions of a man who never wanted decorations of language, and always taught his reader to think. The *Life of the late King of Pruſſia*, as far as it extends, is a model of the biographical ſtyle. The *review* of the " Origin of Evil," was, perhaps, written with aſperity; but the angry epitaph, which it provoked from Soame Jenyns, was an ill-timed reſentment, unworthy of the genius of that amiable author.

" The *Rambler* may be conſidered as Johnſon's great work. It was the baſis of that high reputation which went on increaſing to the end of his days. In this collection, Johnſon is the great moral teacher of his countrymen; his eſſays form a body of ethics; the obſervations on life and man-

ners are acute and inſtructive; and the papers, profeſſedly critical, ſerve to promote the cauſe of literature. It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that a ſettled gloom hangs over the author's mind; and all the eſſays, except eight or ten, coming from the ſame fountain-head, no wonder that they have the racineſs of the ſoil from which they ſprung. Of this uniformity Johnſon was ſenſible. He uſed to ſay, that if he had joined a friend or two, who would have been able to intermix papers of a ſprightly turn, the collection would have been more miſcellaneous, and by conſequence, more agreeable to the generality of readers.

" It is remarkable that the pomp of diction, which has been objected to Johnſon, was firſt aſſumed in the *Rambler*. His *Dictionary* was going on at the ſame time; and in the courſe of that work, as he grew familiar with technical and ſcholaſtic words, he thought that the bulk of his readers

were equally learned, or at leaſt would admire the ſplendour and dignity of the ſtyle. And yet it is well known, that he praiſed in Cowley the eaſe and unaffected ſtructure of the ſentences. Cowley may be placed at the head of thoſe who cultivated a clear and natural ſtyle. Dryden, Tillotſon, and Sir William Temple followed. Addiſon, Swift, and Pope, with more correctneſs, carried our language well nigh to perfection. Of Addiſon, Johnſon was uſed to ſay, he is the Raphael of eſſay writers. How he differed ſo widely from ſuch elegant models, is a problem not to be ſolved, unleſs it be true that he took an early tincture from the writers of the laſt century, particularly Sir Thomas Brown.—Hence the peculiarities of his ſtyle, new combinations, ſentences of an unuſual ſtructure, and words derived from the learned languages. His own account of the matter is, " when common words were leſs pleaſing to the ear,

or leſs diſtinct in their ſignification, I familiarized the terms of philoſophy, by applying them to popular ideas." But he forgot the obſervation of Dryden: *If too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were deſigned, not to aſſiſt the natives, but to conquer them.* There is, it muſt be admitted, a ſwell of language, often out of all proportion to the ſentiment; but there is, in general, a fulneſs of mind, and the thought ſeems to expand with the ſound of the words. Determined to diſcard colloquial barbariſms and licentious idioms, he forgot the elegant ſimplicity that diſtinguiſhes the writings of Addiſon. He had what Locke calls a round-about view of his ſubject; and, though he was never tainted like many modern wits, with the ambition of ſhining in the paradox, he may be fairly called an *original thinker*. His reading was extenſive. He treaſured in his mind whatever was worthy of notice; but

he added to it from his own meditation. He collected, *quæ reconderet, actaque promeret.* Addiſon was not ſo profound a thinker. He was born to write, converſe, and live with eaſe; and he found an early patron in Lord Somers. He depended, however, more upon a fine taſte, than the vigour of his mind. His Latin poetry ſhows, that he reliſhed, with a juſt ſelection, all the refined and delicate beauties of the Roman claſſics; and when he cultivated his native language, no wonder that he formed that graceful ſtyle, which has been ſo juſtly admired; ſimple, yet elegant; adorned, yet never over-wrought; rich in illuſion, yet pure and perſpicuous; correct, without labour; and, though ſometimes deficient in ſtrength, yet always muſical. His eſſays, in general, are on the ſurface of life; if ever original, it was in pieces of humour. Sir Roger de Coverly, and the Tory Fox-hunter, need not be mentioned.

Johnſon had a fund of humour, but he did not know it; nor was he willing to deſcend to the familiar idiom, and the variety of diction which that mode of compoſition required. The letter, in the *Rambler*, No. 12. from a young girl that wants a place, will illuſtrate this obſervation. Addiſon poſſeſſed an unclouded imagination, alive to the firſt objects of nature and of art. He reaches the ſublime without any apparent effort. When he tells us, " if we conſider the fixed ſtars as ſo many oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different ſet of planets; if we ſtill diſcover new firmaments and new lights, that are ſunk further in thoſe unfathomable depths of æther, we are loſt in a labyrinth of ſuns and worlds, and confounded with the magnificence and immenſity of nature;" he eaſe with which this paſſage riſes to an unaffected grandeur, is the ſecret charm that captivates the reader. Johnſon is always

lofty; he ſeems to uſe Dryden's phraſe, to be o'er inform'd with meaning, and his words do not appear to himſelf adequate to his conception. He moves in ſtate, and his periods are always harmonious. His *Oriental Tales* are in the true ſtyle of eaſtern magnificence, and yet none of them are ſo much admired as the viſions of Mirza. In matters of criticiſm, Johnſon is never the echo of preceding writers. He thinks and decides for himſelf. If we except the Eſſays on the pleaſures of imagination, Addiſon cannot be called a philoſophical critic. His moral Eſſays are beautiful; but in that province nothing can exceed the *Rambler;* though Johnſon uſed to ſay, that the eſſay on the burdens of mankind (in the Spectator, No. 558) was the moſt exquiſite he had ever read. Talking of himſelf, Johnſon ſaid, "Topham Beauclerk has wit, and every thing comes from him

with eaſe; but when I ſay a good thing, I ſeem to labour." When we compare him with Addiſon, the contraſt is ſtill ſtronger. Addiſon lends grace and ornament to truth; Johnſon gives it force and energy. Addiſon makes virtue amiable; Johnſon repreſents it as an awful duty. Addiſon inſinuates himſelf with an air of modeſty; Johnſon commands like a dictator; but a dictator in his ſplendid robes, not labouring at his plough. Addiſon is the Jupiter of Virgil, with placid ſerenity talking to Venus:

" Vultu, quo cœlum tempeſtateſque ſerenat."

Johnſon is *Jupiter tonans:* he darts his lightning, and rolls his thunder, in the cauſe of virtue and piety. The language ſeems to fall ſhort of his ideas; he pours along, familiariſing the terms of philoſophy with bold inverſions and ſonorous periods; but we may apply to him what

Pope has ſaid of Homer: " It is the ſentiment that ſwells and fills out the diction, which riſes with it, and forms itſelf about it; like glaſs in the furnace, which grows to a greater magnitude, as the breath within is more powerful, and the heat more intenſe."

" The eſſays written by Johnſon in the " Adventurer," may be called a continuation of the *Rambler*. The *Idler*, in order to be conſiſtent with the aſſumed character, is written with abated vigour, in a ſtyle of eaſe and unlaboured elegance. It is the Odyſſey after the Iliad. Intenſe thinking would not become the *Idler*. The firſt number preſents a well-drawn portrait of an idler; and from that character no deviation could be made. Accordingly Johnſon forgets his auſtere manner, and plays us into ſenſe. He ſtill continues his lectures on human life; but he adverts to common occurrences, and is often content

with the topic of the day. This account of the *Idler* may be cloſed, after obſerving, that the author's mother being buried on the 23d of January 1759, there is an admirable paper, occaſioned by that event, on Saturday the 27th of the ſame month, No. 41. The reader, if he pleaſes, may compare it with another fine paper in the *Rambler*, No. 41, on the conviction that ruſhes on the mind at the bed of a dying friend.

" *Raſſelas*," ſays Sir John Hawkins, " is a ſpecimen of our language ſcarcely to be paralleled; it is written in a ſtyle refined to a degree of *immaculate purity*, and diſplays the whole force of *turgid* eloquence." One cannot but ſmile at this encomium. Raſſelas is undoubtedly both elegant and ſublime. It is a view of human life, diſplayed, it muſt be owned, in gloomy colours. The author's natural melancholy, depreſſed at the time by the approaching diſſolu-

tion of his mother, darkened the picture. A tale that ſhould keep curioſity awake by the artifice of unexpected incidents, was not the deſign of a mind pregnant with better things. He who reads the heads of the chapters, will find that it is not a courſe of adventures that invites him forward, but a diſcuſſion of intereſting queſtions; Reflections on Human Life; the Hiſtory of Imlac, the Man of Learning; a Diſſertation upon Poetry; the Character of a Wife and Happy Man, who diſcourſes with energy on the government of the paſſions, and on a ſudden, when death deprives him of his daughter, forgets all his maxims of wiſdom, and the eloquence that adorned them, yielding to the ſtroke of affliction with all the vehemence of the bittereſt anguiſh. It is by pictures of life, and profound moral reflection, that expectation is engaged and gratified throughout the work. The Hiſ-

tory of the Mad Aſtronomer, who imagines that for five years he poſſeſſed the regulation of the weather, and that the ſun paſſed from tropic to tropic by his direction, repreſents, in ſtricting colours, the ſad effects of a diſtempered imagination. It becomes the more affecting, when we recollect that it proceeds from one who lived in fear of the ſame dreadful viſitation; from one, who ſays emphatically, "Of the uncertainties in our preſent ſtate, the moſt dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reaſon." The inquiry into the cauſe of madneſs, and the dangerous prevalence of imagination, till in time ſome particular train of ideas fixes the attention, and the mind recurs conſtantly to the favourite conception, is carried on in a ſtrain of acute obſervation; but it leaves us room to think that the author was tranſcribing from his own apprehenſions. The diſcourſe on the nature of the ſoul gives us

all that philoſophy knows; not without a tincture of ſuperſtition. It is remarkable that the vanity of human purſuits was, about the ſame time, the ſubject that employed both Johnſon and Voltaire; but *Candide* is the work of a lively imagination, and Raſſelas, with all its ſplendour of eloquence, exhibits a gloomy picture.

" The *Dictionary*, though in ſome inſtances abuſe has been loud, and in others malice has endeavoured to undetermine its fame, ſtill remains the *Mount Atlas* of Engliſh literature.

> Though ſtorms and tempeſts thunder on its brow,
> And oceans break their billows at its feet,
> It ſtands unmov'd, and glories in its height.

" That Johnſon was eminently qualified for the office of a commentator on *Shakſpeare*, no man can doubt; but it was an office which he never cordially embraced. The public expected more than he had

diligence to perform; and yet his edition has been the ground on which every ſubſequent commentator has choſe to build. The general obſervations at the end of the ſeveral plays, with great elegance and preciſion, give a ſummary view of each drama. The preface is a tract of great erudition and philoſophical criticiſm.

" Johnſon's *political pamphlets*, whatever was his motive for writing them, whether gratitude for his penſion, or the ſolicitation of men in power, did not ſupport the cauſe for which they were undertaken. They are written in a ſtyle truly harmonious, and with his uſual dignity of language. When it is ſaid that he advanced poſitions repugnant to *the common rights of mankind*, the virulence of party may be ſuſpected. It is, perhaps, true, that in the clamour raiſed throughout the kingdom, Johnſon over-heated his mind; but he was a friend to the rights of man, and he was

greatly ſuperior to the littleneſs of ſpirit that might incline him to advance what he did not think and firmly believe.

" The account of his *Journey to the Hebrides* or Weſtern Iſles of Scotland, is a model for ſuch as ſhall hereafter relate their travels. The author did not viſit that part of the world in the character of an antiquary, to amuſe us with wonders taken from the dark and fabulous ages; nor as a mathematician, to meaſure a degree, and ſettle the longitude and latitude of the ſeveral iſlands. Thoſe who expected ſuch information, expected what was never intended.

In every work regard the writer's end.

Johnſon went to ſee men and manners, modes of life, and the progreſs of civilization. His remarks are ſo artfully blended with the rapidity and elegance of his narrative, that the reader is inclined to wiſh,

as Johnſon did with regard to Gray, that *to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment.*

" We come now to the *Lives of the Poets*, a work undertaken at the age of ſeventy, yet the moſt brilliant, and certainly the moſt popular of all our author's writings. For this performance he needed little preparation. Attentive always to the hiſtory of letters, and by his own natural bias fond of biography, he was the more willing to embrace the propoſition of the bookſellers. He was verſed in the whole body of the Engliſh poetry, and his rules of criticiſm were ſettled with preciſion. The facts are related upon the beſt intelligence, and the beſt vouchers that could be gleaned, after a great lapſe of time. Probability was to be inferred from ſuch materials as could be procured, and no man better underſtood the nature of hiſtorical evidence than Johnſon; no man was

more religiouſly an obſerver of truth. If his hiſtory is any where defective, it muſt be imputed to the want of better information, and the errors of uncertain tradition.

Ad nos vix tenuis famæ prelabitur aura.

" If the ſtrictures on the works of the various authors are not always ſatisfactory, and if erroneous criticiſm may ſometimes be ſuſpected, who can hope, that, in matters of taſte, all ſhall agree? The inſtances in which the public mind has differed from the poſitions advanced by the author, are few in number. It has been ſaid, that juſtice has not been done to Swift; that Gay and Prior are undervalued; and that Gray has been harſhly treated. This charge, perhaps, ought not to be diſputed. Johnſon, it is well known, had conceived a prejudice againſt Swift. His friends trembled for him when he was

writing that life, but were pleaſed, at laſt, to ſee it executed with temper and moderation. As to Prior, it is probable that he gave his real opinion; but an opinion that will not be adopted by men of lively fancy. With regard to Gray, when he condemns the apoſtrophe, in which Father Thames is deſired to tell who drives the hoop or toſſes the ball, and then adds, that Father Thames had no better means of knowing than himſelf; when he compares the abrupt beginning of the firſt ſtanza of the "Bard" to the ballad of "Johnny Armſtrong," "*Is there ever a man in all Scotland;*" there are, perhaps, few friends of Johnſon, who would not wiſh to blot out both the paſſages."

The following quotation from Horace is given by Mr. Murphy, as containing Johnſon's picture in miniature.

"Iracundior eſt paulo minus aptus acutis
Naribus horum hominum, rideri poſſit, eo quid

Ruſticius tonſo toga deſluit, et male laxus
In pede calceus hæret. At eſt bonus, ut melior vir
Non alius quiſquam; at tibi amicus, at ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc ſub corpore."———

His moral and literary character has been delineated by Miſs Seward the poeteſs of Litchfield, in the "European Magazine" for 1785, with equal accuracy of diſcrimination and ſtrength of colouring.

"Dr. Johnſon's learning and knowledge were deep and univerſal. His conception was ſo clear, and his intellectual ſtores were marſhalled with ſuch preciſion, that his ſtyle in common converſation equalled that of his moral eſſays. Whatever charge of pedantic ſtiffneſs may have been brought againſt thoſe eſſays, by prejudice, or by perſonal reſentment, they are certainly not leſs ſuperior to all other Engliſh compoſitions of that ſort, in the happy fertility and efflorescence of imagination, harmony of period, and luminous arrange-

ment of ideas, than they are in ſtrength of expreſſion, and force of argument. His Latiniſms, for which he has been much cenſured, have extended the limits of our native dialect, beſides enriching its ſounds with that ſonorous ſweetneſs, which the intermixture of words from a more harmonious language muſt neceſſarily produce; I mean in general, for it cannot be denied that they ſometimes deform the Johnſonian page, though they much oftener adorn it. His *London* is a very brilliant and nervous ſatiric poem, and his *Vanity of Human Wiſhes* appears to me a much finer ſatire than the beſt of Pope's. Perhaps its poetic beauty is not excelled by any compoſition in heroic rhyme which this country can boaſt, rich as ſhe is in that ſpecies of writing. As a moraliſt, Dr. Johnſon was reſpectable, ſplendid, ſublime; but as a critic, the faults of his diſpoſition have diſgraced much of his fine

writings with frequent paradox, unprincipled miſrepreſentation, mean and needleſs expoſure of bodily infirmities (as in the life of Pope), irreconcileable contradictions, and with deciſions of the laſt abſurdity. Dr. Johnſon had ſtrong affections where literary envy did not interfere; but that envy was of ſuch deadly potency, as to load his converſation, as it has loaded his biographic works, with the rancour of party violence, with national averſion, bitter ſarcaſm, and unchriſtian-like invective. It is in vain to deſcant upon the improbability that Dr. Johnſon, under the conſciouſneſs of abilities ſo great, and of a fame ſo extenſive, ſhould envy any man, ſince it is more than improbable, it is wholly impoſſible, that an imagination ſo ſublime, and a judgment ſo correct, on all abſtract ſubjects, ſhould decide as he has decided upon the works of *ſome* who were at leaſt his equals, and

upon *one* who is yet greater than himſelf. Dr. Johnſon was a furious Jacobite, while one hope for the Stuart line remained; and his politics, always leaning towards deſpotiſm, were inimical to liberty, and the natural rights of mankind. He was punctual in his devotions; but his religious faith had much more of bigot-fierceneſs than of that gentleneſs which the goſpel inculcates. To thoſe who had never entered the literary confines, or, entering them, had paid him the tribute of unbounded praiſe and total ſubjection, he was an affectionate and generous friend, ſoothing in his behaviour to them, and active in promoting their domeſtic comforts; though, in ſome ſpleenful moments, he could not help ſpeaking diſreſpectfully both of their mental powers and of their virtues. His pride was infinite; yet, amidſt all the overbearing arrogance it produced, his heart melted at the ſight or at the repreſentation of diſeaſe and po-

verty; and, in the hours of affluence, his purſe was ever open to relieve them. In ſeveral inſtances, his affections ſeemed unaccountably engaged by people of whoſe diſpoſition and abilities he ſcrupled not to ſpeak contemptuouſly at all times, and in all humours. To ſuch he often devoted, and eſpecially of late years, a large portion of that time which might naturally be ſuppoſed to have been precious to him, who ſo well knew how to employ it. When his attention was called to modern writings, particularly if they were celebrated, and not written by any of his "little ſenate," he generally liſtened with angry impatience. "No, Sir, I ſhall not read the book," was his common reply. He turned from the compoſitions of riſing genius with a viſible horror, which too plainly proved, that envy was the boſom ſerpent of this literary deſpot, whoſe life had been unpolluted by licentious crimes,

and who had ſome great and noble qualities, accompanying a ſtupendous reach of underſtanding."

His character, as a poetical biographer, has been given by his townſman Dr. Newton, in his poſthumous work, not perhaps with his powers, but with his deciſion and ſeverity of cenſure.

" Dr. Johnſon's *Lives of the Poets* afford much amuſement, but candour was hurt and offended at the malevolence that preponderated in every part. Never was any biographer more ſparing of his praiſes, or more abundant in his cenſures. He delights more in expoſing blemiſhes, than in recommending beauties; ſlightly paſſes over excellencies; enlarges upon imperfections; and, not content with his own ſevere reflections, revives old ſcandal, and produces large quotations from the long-forgotten works of former critics. The panegyriſt of Savage in his youth, may, in his old age,

become the ſatiriſt of the moſt favoured authors, his encomium as unjuſt and undeſerved as his cenſures."

The teſtimony of the claſſical editor of Milton may be compared with the eulogy pronounced by Dr. Parr, the learned and eloquent editor of "Bellendenus," in his edition of "Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian."

"Of literary merit, Johnſon, as we all know, was a ſagacious but a moſt ſevere judge. Such was his diſcernment, that he pierced into the moſt ſecret ſprings of human actions; and ſuch was his integrity, that he always weighed the moral characters of his fellow creatures in "the balance of the ſanctuary."

His peculiarities and foibles are painted in ſtrong colours by Mr. Courtenay, in his "Poetical Review;" but, in return, his virtues and abilities are candidly acknowledged, and placed in their proper light. Hav-

ing alternately commended his merits, and cenſured his faults, he ſums up the whole in the following lines, which ſtrongly mark the character of his work.

" Thus ſings the muſe, to Johnſon's mem'ry juſt,
And ſcatters praiſe and cenſure o'er his duſt;
For, through each chequer'd ſcene a contraſt ran,
Too ſad a proof, how great, how weak is man!
Though o'er his paſſions conſcience held the rein,
He ſhook at diſmal phantoms of the brain;
A boundleſs faith that noble mind debas'd,
By piercing wit, energic reaſon grac'd:
Ev'n ſhades like theſe, to brilliancy allied,
May comfort fools, and curb the ſage's pride;
Yet learning's ſons, who o'er his foibles mourn,
To lateſt time ſhall fondly view his urn;
And, wond'ring, praiſe, to human frailties blind,
Talents and virtues of the brighteſt kind.
The ſculptur'd trophy and imperial buſt,
That proudly riſe around his hallow'd duſt,
Shall mould'ring fall, by time's ſlow hand decay'd;
But the bright meed of virtue ne'er ſhall fade.
Exulting genius ſtamps his ſacred name,
Enroll'd for ever in the dome of fame."

FINIS.